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*The Heritage of London*

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The Heritage of Kansas

Selected Contributions to the History of Kansas

# The Heritage of Kansas

Edited by J. H. P. Smith

Published by the University of Kansas Press

Lawrence, Kansas, 1915





# The Heritage of Kansas

*Selected Commentaries on Past Times*

*edited by*

Everett Rich

University of Kansas Press

Lawrence, 1960

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L.C.C.C. Number 60-9210



PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

BY THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS PRESS

LAWRENCE, KANSAS



## *Preface*

If one who lived in the days when Kansas was organized as a territory, a little more than a hundred years ago, could now return and observe the changes, he would discover a world as fantastic as anything in imaginative fiction. These changes, of course, have not been peculiar to Kansas; but in Kansas they receive their own coloring because of the circumstances under which the state was organized, the temperament of its pioneers, their aspirations and their ideals. Today tens of thousands of Kansans have never seen a buffalo outside a park or circus, never seen a covered wagon, to say nothing of a wagon train, would not recognize an Indian if they met one, and, living in the comforts of modern civilization, little realize the hardships and privations that turned the so-called Great American Desert into what is now popularly called the bread basket of the nation.

Yet even today a few men still live who watched the wagon trains wind their way westward, who saw the distant hills darkened as from the shadow of a vast cloud by the roaming herds of buffalo, who hunted deer to provide meat for the family table, and who talked to the wandering Indians in their native habitats. Today in ninety minutes men travel a distance which ninety years ago the average stage could not make in less than a day and night of continuous travel. Today men live in the western half of the state, grow rich or poor according to the seasons, world conditions, and their own judgment by growing wheat in a region which many still thought uninhabitable fifty years ago.

The selections which make up this collection give a panoramic view of Kansas life during the state's formative period. They are written by many different kinds of people. Most of the selections are by persons who in some way participated in the founding of the state, though a great many are by outside observers, and a few are by present-day writers who look back with something like historical perspective. Interpretations, which exist in profusion, have been avoided except for the concluding selection. It is by Carl Becker, a highly respected historian who lived some years within the state, and who looks at Kansas at the end of the period covered by the selections in this volume. In general, however, the spirit that animated the builders of Kansas, that spirit's persistence or lack of persistence

to the present time, the reader will have to discover for himself as he reads these selections.

This collection should not be mistaken for an anthology. Literary standards in the strict sense had nothing to do with the choice of these selections; and if the reader does find one having literary merit, it is reprinted because it reflects some aspect of pioneer life. Readability and interest, major factors in choosing these selections, are the only standards which might conceivably be called literary.

Nor should the reader mistake this collection for anything like a consecutive history. Probably some important aspects of pioneer life are not covered at all; certainly some are covered inadequately because the material does not exist or could not be included. The historical errors will certainly pain the professional historian; but persons in their time and place act from what they believe to be true, not what later historians find to be true.

In general, the collection covers Kansas down to 1900. It depicts something of the struggle with the major issues and a little of the daily round of everyday living. From the whole it is hoped the reader will get a fairly comprehensive view of the life and times and peoples who in a half century carved Kansas out of the western plains.

I am greatly indebted to many contemporary writers and publishers who readily made their writings available, to Kansas State University for permission to use selections from the *Kansas Magazine*, to the Kansas State Historical Society for permission to use selections from the publications of the Society and, especially, to Dr. Clyde K. Hyder, Manager of the University of Kansas Press, for his many thoughtful suggestions and careful editing of the text.

E. R.

Emporia, Kansas  
March, 1960

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# I.

## The Old West

*What is now Kansas was first explored by the Spaniards under Coronado in the 1540's. The Spaniards failed to find the cities of fabled gold, and left the region to the unknown for two and a half centuries. In 1803 the territory comprising most of present-day Kansas became a part of the United States by the Louisiana Purchase. The next year Lewis and Clark explored Kansas along the Missouri River, and in 1806 Pike explored the state from its eastern to its western boundaries. During the third and fourth decades of the century, it was largely the pathway to the West. First came the Santa Fe traders, then the Oregon settlers, then the Mormons, and finally the California gold-seekers. But for all the untold thousands who passed through Kansas, except for certain outposts of civilization, it remained a part of the Great American Desert.*

### *America's Don Quixote*

by DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE

[Donald Culross Peattie, a professional writer, is the author of a score of books and is a roving editor for the *Reader's Digest*.]

ONE LONG FIESTA, from now until Christmas, will mark the Southwest's jubilee year of 1940. For it is just four hundred years ago that white civilization first came to Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, and the panhandles of Oklahoma and Texas. It came with color and glory, with hopes valorous as they were vain; it came on the sandaled feet of martyr priests; it came at the point of the invincible sword of the last knight of Spain.

The story of that coming will be re-enacted all along the route of this American Quixote, Don Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, to the tune of Spanish, Indian, Forty-niner, and cowboy music, to the rhythm of the square dances of our ancestors, the slapping feet of the pueblo dwellers, the courtly step of Spanish cavaliers. Brilliant old Spanish costumes will be brought forth from hiding; ancient vehicles will roll again when covered wagons race; blooded steeds will pace where the mounts of Coronado's army stumbled.

In New Mexico alone 10,000 people will participate in pageants

that will revive the cavalcade of Coronado, folk songs of Indian, Spanish, and American origin, old fiddlers' contests, a retelling of native and cowboy legends, tournaments, rock-drilling contests, fiestas, and religious dramas.

And all under the aegis of the Coronado Cuarto Centennial, and to commemorate the fantastic courage of this grandee of Spain and Governor of New Galicia, whose journey of explorations had few rivals in the long saga of American discovery. What Marquette and La Salle did for the Mississippi Valley, what Lewis and Clark did for the Northwest, Coronado accomplished for the Southwest four hundred years ago.

It was on Sunday, February 22, 1540, that this conquistador stood at Compostela, Mexico, glittering in gilded armor as he reviewed his troops. His helmet shone gold; so did his breastplate and gorget and brasserts, cuisses and gauntlets. Curbing beneath them the finest blooded steeds from the famed stud farms of the viceroy rode 260 Spanish gentlemen, all young men of high birth. The blankets of the horses flowed to the ground, while each rider held erect his glittering lance and bore a sword at his side. All their armor was polished to shine as bright as the general's golden suit. Sixty footmen carried crossbows and harquebuses; some were armed with sword and shield. And, awed and excited, a thousand friendly Indians, Mexican allies and slaves, looked on, fingering now their ornaments and now their clubs or bows.

Never had the New World beheld such an army. For never had there been such a venture. All Mexico was ringing with the tales of a great empire in the north, where lay the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola. Somewhere in what we should now call Arizona and New Mexico, the rumor ran, were towns as large as any in Spain, where the doorways were studded with jewels, and every other citizen was a goldsmith or a worker in silver. The climate, it was said, was like that of Europe, the meads more flowery, the soil more fertile. And all the women beautiful.

All unconscious of what awaited them, the hopeful host set forth, banners flying, cheers ringing, priests chanting Glorias. Horse and foot, clanking in armor, the band of medieval Europeans disappeared over the rim of Mexico, into the realm of the Apache and the rattlesnake.

Coronado's men entered what is now the United States in late



May, at a spot probably near Nogales, Arizona. Already many a proud caballero was saddle-sore; many a steed was galled; finery had been flung aside all along the way, and yet the hardships had scarce begun, for the American wilderness was waiting for them, and it had only to wait. In its quiver it held deadly arrows—pitiless Indian tribes, sunstroke, sanded wells, wastes without water, mountains without passes, plains without landmarks, chasms without bridges.

To Coronado's parched and wearied army it must have seemed a fever nightmare. Today we go to the southern Arizona desert just because it is a desert; we love it for its emptiness, its wholesome aridity, its dreamy mesas, with the fantastic arms of the saguaros outlined against a cobalt sky. For this is the land of the dude ranch, where the Easterner, long pent up by winter, knows the exhilaration of a stirring gallop. This is the country of lost health regained, that has saved thousands upon thousands of lives. Where the horses of Coronado stumbled and died, the Tucson rodeo, every year, holds high fiesta, cowboys yipping, Apaches racing against Papagoes, whom once they would have scalped. Or the motorist lets his car out on the long stretches, covering three days of Coronado's march in an hour, as he spins through creosote bush to view the adobe ruins such as that on which Coronado came, only to find them empty.

The route of the adventurers took them across the Santa Catalina Mountains, where not long ago a jeweled sword of Castilian steel was found rusted among the rocks, and where today the rich Easterners' children go to ranch schools. Somewhere near old Fort Grant the expedition struck the Gila River. Beyond it there faced Coronado what his chronicler always referred to as the Great Wilderness, the Mogollon mesa and the White Mountain Apache country. No European had ever ventured across it and come back alive.

Even today no railroad traverses this great barrier. For Coronado's army it was the bitterest of all their experiences yet, the one that broke the courage of the adventurous host, that left the cattle train dead along the way, that hurled the baggage down the chasms, and many a proud steed beside. Today you sleep sound in motor camps, on U.S. Highway 60, where his sentries heard the coyotes howl. You drink at wayside refreshment stands, where his soldiers were mad with thirst.

Not until July 7 did those fantastic crusaders come within sight of the first of Cibola's fabled Seven Cities. All along, the Coronadistas had been imagining some sort of Emerald City of Oz; tradition

had it that it was greater than Mexico City at the height of Montezuma's power. But the weary and greedy adventurers beheld, atop a beetling cliff, nothing but a pile of a few hundred flat-topped houses, inhabited by a dark, squat people, whose greatest treasures were ceremonial figurines of their gods, some turquoises, pottery, mats and rugs and baskets.

But the Spaniards had come for conquest, so up the narrow stone steps of the cliff, mere toehold niches, in their armor, they pressed on, the Indians rolling great rocks upon them. With fire and sword they fought their way from house to house. And when victory was theirs, how bitter in their mouths! But there was nothing to do but to go on, and take all the "cities" of Cibola, getting nothing but wounds in exchange for empty glory, receiving the smoldering submission of the Pueblo Indians.

Today we easily identify the first of the seven cities as the Hawikuh pueblo, in what is now McKinley County, New Mexico. Acoma, Laguna, Pecos—we recognize them with some certainty from the Spaniards' descriptions. Others are vaguer; but we can be certain that the village of Tiguex is what today we call Bernalillo, on the Rio Grande, halfway between Albuquerque and Santa Fe.

To Coronado's eyes the pueblos were bitter disappointment, miserable agglomerations ill rewarding such fatigues and courage as he had endured to see them. But, wistful for every trace of the vanished or now decadent pueblo civilization, the American views the ruined pueblos with regretful eyes.

Today curious bystanders at the steps of our cars with their Eastern license plates, we watch with an only half comprehending curiosity the rattlesnake dances, the rain dances and corn dances, the bleeding processions of the Penitentes, at the extant pueblos. Every visitor to New Mexico loves the smell of piñon smoke, the chuckle of irrigation waters led through the cool, dim patios of old Spanish homes, the silvery clangor of the old church bells, the golden eyes of the Mexican goats, the lisp of olive leaves.

This is New Mexico as Coronado might have dreamed it would become; it is Old Mexico in the New. We are ourselves responsible for the springing into being of the New Mexico—the metaled highways where the buses leap, the roaring passage of the streamliners (shuttles that weave a blanket of tourists all over the land), shining Harvey lunchrooms with their piping coffee and smart waitresses, Taos artists, Santa Fe poets. Today New Mexico commingles three

civilizations—Pueblo, Spanish, and American—and wears them with some grace.

All during that first winter the conquistador was not idle. He subdued all the country for hundreds of miles around. His officers led forth companies that traced the Rio Grande clear down to what is now El Paso, Texas; another party, first of all white men, reached the stupendous earth-gulf of the Grand Canyon, where not all the might of his most Christian Majesty, Charles V of Spain, was puissant enough to bridge the chasm.

But with spring a great restlessness was on that battered company of romantics. For, if Cibola had proved a disillusion, there remained still "Quivira," a land to the east about which the "Turk," a captive Plains Indian, was telling tall tales—of chiefs who wore gold breastplates and cooked in dishes of pure copper. So in 1541 Coronado led his army forth again, and the knights of Spain were soon journeying across the wilderness to come up with the foot of the rainbow.

The route of Coronado took him around the end of the Sangre de Cristo ranges, past present-day Las Vegas ("fruitful plains"), and north through the Raton Pass to buttes we might identify with Trinidad, Colorado.

But now the Turk—some crafty Pawnee or Kansa perhaps—turned east, putting the Rockies at his back, till their shining snows sank below the horizon, and the cavalcade marched out upon the high plains of Kansas. They rode, they said, through endless miles of a bush that smelled like marjoram—whereby we recognize sagebrush—and their horses were constantly stumbling in the holes dug by some strange ground squirrel, which assuredly means prairie-dog towns.

On, and always onward, they rode, till they came to the sea of grass whose stems rose up again as soon as the army had passed, hiding the trail, until at last they came up with the buffalo herds. It was a sight no white man had ever seen before; millions of fierce shaggy wild cattle, bellowing, stampeding, snuffing the flowers, lowering their horns for fight. For the first time the European horse and the American bison were met in battle, speed and intelligence pitted against ponderous weight and brute fury. Exciting sport for the caballeros—but woe to the man that lost his way in the heat of the chase. The emptiness of the prairie, the featureless monotony, where



no echoes ever answered and the voice of the lost was swallowed up in silence—these appalled the knights.

And always "Quivira" receded with the horizon. Almost convinced of deception, Coronado sent back the main contingent of his army, somewhere near Wichita, and with thirty picked horsemen he turned north, where the Turk, now in chains, still promised golden good fortune. Probably somewhere near Lincoln, Nebraska (at a guess), Coronado forced from the Turk a confession that he had deliberately misled the Spaniards. The Turk was garroted on the spot. But only bitterness was in the mouth of the conquistador as he retraced his course toward Mexico. The gold and purple of the prairie autumn flowers was fading. No longer did the sear grass spring beneath the heavy hoofs; all the land lay waiting the winter blizzards, ragged and faded as an old lion hide.

He could not see, this glory-dazzled man, the dark velvet loam of the fertile prairies. He never dreamed of a million head of cattle grazing placidly where the buffalo stamped and fought. How could he foresee Kansas corn, tall as a man on horseback? Nebraska wheat, a running river of gold? He could know nothing of the radio bringing news from Spain to the ranch of eastern Colorado, swift as the speed of light, nor Havana dance orchestras pouring rhythm and fun and melody into Texan kitchens. Where his knights in armor floundered through snowbanks of the Panhandle, the automatic beacons wave on the mail plane flying through the storm at two hundred miles an hour.

The ranch flivver has obliterated distance even for the poor man, and Arabian Nights Entertainment comes a thousand and one times to Wagon Mound, New Mexico, on a silver screen. Descendants of the horses that the Indians stole from Coronado's army are carrying the peaceful red man in from Tesuque pueblo, to spread his wares before the tourists getting off the Lamy bus at Santa Fe. The government has made a reservation of the giant cacti that beckoned the Spaniard on to defeat. The raging Colorado is tamed to a turquoise lake.

Nothing remembers you, Coronado, nothing is the same. You leveled your lance at golden Quivira, and charged—only to find it was the American sun, getting up in glory on a prairie day.

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## Commerce on the Santa Fe Trail

by JOSIAH GREGG

[Josiah Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies* is a classic in the literature of western history. Gregg first sought the prairies in the hope of regaining his health, and found not only health but a new interest. He crossed the plains eight times between the United States and the present New Mexico.]

IT WAS on the 15th of May, 1831, and one of the brightest and most lovely of all the days in the calendar, that our little party set out from Independence. The general rendezvous at Council Grove was our immediate destination. It is usual for the traders to travel thus far in detached parties, and to assemble there for the purpose of entering into some kind of organization, for mutual security and defence during the remainder of the journey. It was from thence that the formation of the Caravan was to be dated, and the chief interest of our journey to commence: therefore, to this point we all looked forward with great anxiety. The intermediate travel was marked by very few events of any interest. As the wagons had gone before us, and we were riding in a light carriage, we were able to reach the Round Grove, about thirty-five miles distant, on the first day, where we joined the rear division of the caravan, comprising about thirty wagons.

On the following day we had a foretaste of those protracted, drizzling spells of rain, which, at this season of the year, so much infest the frontier prairies. It began sprinkling about dark, and continued pouring without let or hindrance for forty-eight hours in succession; and as the rain was accompanied by a heavy north-wester, and our camp was pitched in the open prairie, without a stick of available timber within a mile of us, it must be allowed that the whole formed a prelude anything but flattering to valetudinarians. For my own part, finding the dearborn carriage in which I had a berth not exactly water-proof, I rolled myself in a blanket and lay snugly coiled upon a tier of boxes and bales, under cover of a wagon, and thus managed to escape a very severe drenching. . . .

The mischief of the storm did not exhaust itself, however, upon our persons. The loose animals sought shelter in the groves at a considerable distance from the encampment, and the wagoners being loth to turn out in search of them during the rain, not a few of

course, when applied for, were missing. This, however, is no uncommon occurrence. Travellers generally experience far more annoyance from the straying of cattle during the first hundred miles, than at any time afterwards; because, apprehending no danger from the wild Indians (who rarely approach within two hundred miles of the border), they seldom keep any watch, although that is the very time when a cattle-guard is most needed. It is only after some weeks' travel that the animals begin to feel attached to the caravan, which they then consider about as much their home as the stock-yard of a dairy farm.

After leaving this spot the troubles and vicissitudes of our journey began in good earnest; for on reaching the narrow ridge which separates the Osage and Kansas waters (known as 'the Narrows'), we encountered a region of very troublesome quagmires. On such occasions it is quite common for a wagon to sink to the hubs in mud, while the surface of the soil all around would appear perfectly dry and smooth. To extricate each other's wagons we had frequently to employ double and triple teams, with 'all hands to the wheels' in addition—often led by the proprietors themselves up to the waist in mud and water.

Three or four days after this, and while crossing the head branches of the Osage River, we experienced a momentary alarm. Conspicuously elevated upon a rod by the roadside, we found a paper purporting to have been written by the Kansas agent, stating that a band of Pawnees were said to be lurking in the vicinity! The first excitement over, however, the majority of our party came to the conclusion that it was either a hoax of some of the company in advance, or else a stratagem of the Kaws (or Kansas Indians), who, as well as the Osages, prowl about those prairies, and steal from the caravans, during the passage, when they entertain the slightest hope that their maraudings will be laid to others. They seldom venture further, however, than to seize upon an occasional stray animal, which they frequently do with the view alone of obtaining a reward for returning it to its owner. As to the Pawnees, the most experienced traders were well aware that they had not been known to frequent those latitudes since the commencement of the Santa Fe trade. But what contributed as much as anything else to lull the fears of the timid, was an accession to our forces of seventeen wagons which we overtook the same evening.

Early on the 26th of May we reached the long looked-for rendez-



vous of Council Grove, where we joined the main body of the caravan. Lest this imposing title suggest to the reader a snug and thriving village, it should be observed, that, on the day of our departure from Independence, we passed the last human abode upon our route; therefore, from the borders of Missouri to those of New Mexico not even an Indian settlement greeted our eyes.

This point is nearly a hundred and fifty miles from Independence, and consists of a continuous strip of timber nearly half a mile in width, comprising the richest varieties of trees; such as oak, walnut, ash, elm, hickory, etc., and extending all along the valleys of a small stream known as 'Council Grove Creek,' the principal branch of the Neosho River. This stream is bordered by the most fertile bottoms and beautiful upland prairies, well adapted to cultivation: such indeed is the general character of the country from thence to Independence. All who have traversed these delightful regions, look forward with anxiety to the day when the Indian title to the land shall be extinguished, and flourishing 'white' settlements dispel the gloom which at present prevails over this uninhabited region. Much of this prolific country now belongs to the Shawnees and other Indians of the border, though some portion of it has never been allotted to any tribe.

Frequent attempts have been made by travelers to invest the Council Grove with a romantic sort of interest, of which the following fabulous vagary, which I find in a letter that went the rounds of our journals, is an amusing sample: "Here the Pawnee, Arapaho, Comanche, Loup and Eutaw Indians, all of whom were at war with each other, meet and smoke the pipe once a year." Now it is more than probable that not a soul of most of the tribes mentioned above ever saw the Council Grove. Whatever may be the interest attached to this place, however, on account of its historical or fanciful associations, one thing is very certain—that the novice, even here, is sure to imagine himself in the midst of lurking savages. These visionary fears are always a source of no little merriment to the veteran of the field, who does not hesitate to travel, with a single wagon and a comrade or two, or even alone, from the Arkansas River to Independence.

The facts connected with the designation of this spot are simply these. Messrs. Reeves, Sibley and Mathers, having been commissioned by the United States, in the year 1825, to mark a road from the confines of Missouri to Santa Fe, met on this spot with some

bands of Osages, with whom they concluded a treaty, whereby the Indians agreed to allow all citizens of the United States and Mexico to pass unmolested, and even to lend their aid to those engaged in the Santa Fe trade; for which they were to receive a gratification of eight hundred dollars in merchandise. The commissioners, on this occasion, gave to the place the name of 'Council Grove.'

But, although the route examined by the Commissioners named above, was partially marked out as far as the Arkansas, by raised mounds, it seems to have been of but little service to travellers, who continued to follow the trail previously made by the wagons, which is now the settled road to the region of the short 'buffalo grass.'

The designation of 'Council Grove,' after all, is perhaps the most appropriate that could be given to this place; for we there held a 'grand council,' at which the respective claims of the different 'aspirants to office' were considered, leaders selected, and a system of government agreed upon—as is the standing custom of these promiscuous caravans. One would have supposed that electioneering and 'party spirit' would hardly have penetrated so far into the wilderness: but so it was. Even in our little community we had our 'office-seekers' and their 'political adherents,' as earnest and as devoted as any of the modern school of politicians in the midst of civilization. After a great deal of bickering and wordy warfare, however, all the 'candidates' found it expedient to decline, and a gentleman by the name of Stanley, without seeking, or even desiring the 'office,' was unanimously proclaimed 'Captain of the Caravan.' The powers of this officer were undefined by any 'constitutional provision,' and consequently vague and uncertain: orders being only viewed as mere requests, they are often obeyed or neglected at the caprice of the subordinates. It is necessary to observe, however, that the captain is expected to direct the order of travel during the day, and to designate the camping-ground at night; with many other functions of a general character, in the exercise of which the company find it convenient to acquiesce. . . .

But after this comes the principal task of organizing. The proprietors are first notified by 'proclamation' to furnish a list of their men and wagons. The latter are generally apportioned into four 'divisions,' particularly when the company is large—and ours consisted of nearly a hundred wagons, besides a dozen of dearborns and other small vehicles, and two small cannons (a four and six pounder), each mounted upon a carriage. To each of these divisions,

a 'lieutenant' was appointed, whose duty it was to inspect every ravine and creek on the route, select the best crossings, and superintend what is called in prairie parlance, the 'forming' of each encampment.

Upon the calling of the roll, we were found to muster an efficient force of nearly two hundred men without counting invalids or other disabled bodies, who, as a matter of course, are exempt from duty. There is nothing so much dreaded by inexperienced travelers as the ordeal of guard duty. But no matter what the condition or employment of the individual may be, no one has the smallest chance of evading the 'common law of the prairies.' The amateur tourist and the listless loafer are precisely in the same wholesome predicament—they must all take their regular turn at the watch. There is usually a set of genteel idlers attached to every caravan, whose wits are forever at work in devising schemes for whiling away their irksome hours at the expense of others. By embarking in these 'trips of pleasure,' they are enabled to live without expense; for the hospital traders seldom refuse to accommodate even a loafing companion with a berth at their mess without charge. But then these lounging attachés are expected at least to do good service by way of guard duty. None are even permitted to furnish a substitute, as is frequently done in military expeditions, for he that would undertake to stand the tour of another besides his own, would scarcely be watchful enough for the dangers of the Prairies. Even the invalid must be able to produce unequivocal proofs of his inability, or it is a chance if the plea is admitted. For my own part, although I started on the 'sick list,' and though the prairie sentinel must stand fast and brook the severest storm (for then it is that the strictest watch is necessary), I do not remember ever having missed my post but once during the whole journey. . . .

The heterogeneous appearance of our company, consisting of men from every class and grade of society, with a little sprinkling of the softer sex, would have formed an excellent subject for an artist's pencil. It may appear, perhaps, a little extraordinary that females should have ventured across the Prairies under such forlorn auspices. Those who accompanied us, however, were members of a Spanish family who had been banished in 1829, in pursuance of a decree of the Mexican congress, and were now returning to their homes in consequence of a suspension of the decree. Other females, however, have crossed the prairies to Santa Fe at different times, among whom



I have known two respectable French ladies, who now reside in Chihuahua.

The wild and motley aspect of the caravan can be but imperfectly conceived without an idea of the costumes of its various members. The most 'fashionable' prairie dress is the fustian frock of the city-bred merchant furnished with a multitude of pockets capable of accommodating a variety of 'extra tackling.' Then there is the backwoodsman with his linsey or leather hunting-shirt—the farmer with his blue jean coat—the wagoner with his flannel-sleeve vest—besides an assortment of other costumes which go to fill up the picture.

In the article of fire-arms there is also an equally interesting medley. The frontier hunter sticks to his rifle, as nothing could induce him to carry what he terms in derision 'the scatter-gun.' The sportsman from the interior flourishes his double-barrelled fowling-piece with equal confidence in its superiority. The latter is certainly the most convenient description of gun that can be carried on this journey; as a charge of buck-shot in night attacks (which are the most common), will of course be more likely to do execution than a single rifle-ball fired at random. The 'repeating' arms have lately been brought into use upon the Prairies, and they are certainly very formidable weapons, particularly when used against an ignorant savage foe. A great many were furnished besides with a bountiful supply of pistols and knives of every description, so that the party made altogether a very brigand-like appearance.

During our delay at the Council Grove, the laborers were employed in procuring timber for axle-trees and other wagon repairs, of which a supply is always laid in before leaving this region of substantial growths; for henceforward there is no wood on the route fit for these purposes; not even in the mountains of Santa Fe do we meet with any serviceable timber. The supply procured here is generally lashed under the wagons, in which way a log is not unfrequently carried to Santa Fe, and even sometimes back again.

Owing to the delays of organizing and other preparations, we did not leave the Council Grove camp till May 27th. Although the usual hour of starting with the prairie caravans is after an early breakfast, yet, on this occasion, we were hindered till the afternoon. The familiar note of preparation, "Catch up, catch up!" was now sounded from the captain's camp, and re-echoed from every division and scattered group along the valley. On such occasions, a scene of confusion ensues, which must be seen to be appreciated. The woods and



dales resound with the gleeful yells of the light-hearted wagoners, who, weary of inaction, and filled with joy at the prospect of getting under way, become clamorous in the extreme. Scarcely does the jockey on the race-course ply his whip more promptly at that magic word 'Go,' than do these emulous wagoners fly to harnessing their mules at the spirit-stirring sound of 'Catch up.' Each teamster vies with his fellows who shall be soonest ready; and it is a matter of boastful pride to be the first to cry out, "All's set!"

The uproarious bustle which follows—the hallooing of those in pursuit of animals—the exclamations which the unruly brutes call forth from their wrathful drivers; together with the clatter of bells—the rattle of yokes and harness—the jingle of chains—all conspire to produce a clamorous confusion, which would be altogether incomprehensible without the assistance of the eyes; while these alone would hardly suffice to unravel the labyrinthian manoeuvres and hurly-burly of this precipitate breaking up. It is sometimes amusing to observe the athletic wagoner hurrying an animal to its post—to see him 'heave upon' the halter of a stubborn mule, while the brute as obstinately 'sets back,' determined not to 'move a peg' till his own good pleasure thinks it proper to do so—his whole manner seeming to say, "Wait till your hurry's over!" I have more than once seen a driver hitch a harnessed animal to the halter, and by that process haul 'his mulishness' forward, while each of his four projected feet would leave a furrow behind; until at last the perplexed master would wrathfully exclaim, "A mule will be a mule any way you can fix it!"

"All's set!" is finally heard from some teamster—"All's set," is directly responded from every quarter. "Stretch out!" immediately vociferates the captain. Then, the 'heps!' of drivers—the cracking of whips—the trampling of feet—the occasional creak of wheels—the rumbling of wagons—form a new scene of exquisite confusion, which I shall not attempt further to describe. "Fall in!" is heard from headquarters, and the wagons are forthwith strung out upon the long inclined plain, which stretches to the heights beyond Council Grove.

After fifteen miles' progress, we arrived at the 'Diamond Spring' (a crystal fountain discharging itself into a small brook), to which, in later years, caravans have sometimes advanced, before 'organizing.' Near twenty-five miles beyond we crossed the Cottonwood fork of the Neosho, a creek still smaller than that of Council Grove, and our camp was pitched immediately in its further valley.

When caravans are able to cross in the evening, they seldom stop on the near side of a stream—first, because if it happen to rain during the night, it may become flooded, and cause both detention and trouble: again, though the stream be not impassable after rain, the banks become slippery and difficult to ascend. A third and still more important reason is that, even supposing the contingency of rain does not occur, teams will rarely pull as well in ‘cold collars,’ as wagoners term it—that is, when fresh geared—as in the progress of a day’s travel. When a heavy pull is just at hand in the morning, wagoners sometimes resort to the expedient of driving a circuit upon the prairie, before venturing to ‘take the bank.’

We experienced a temporary alarm during the evening, while we lay encamped at Cottonwood, which was rather more boisterous than serious in its consequences. The wagons had been ‘formed’ across the neck of a bend in the creek, into which the cattle were turned, mostly in their yokes; for though, when thoroughly trained, teamsters usually unyoke their oxen every night, yet at first they often leave them coupled, to save the trouble of re-yoking them in their unruly state. A little after dark, these animals started simultaneously, with a thundering noise and rattle of the yokes, towards the outlet protected by the wagons, but for which obstacle they might have escaped far into the prairie, and have been irrecoverably lost, or, at least, have occasioned much trouble and delay to recover them. The cause of the fright was not discovered; but oxen are exceedingly whimsical creatures when surrounded by unfamiliar objects. One will sometimes take a fright at the jingle of his own yoke-irons, or the cough of his mate, and, by a sudden flounce, set the whole herd in a flurry. This was probably the case in the present instance; although some of our easily excited companions immediately surmised that the oxen had scented a lurking Pawnee.

Our route lay through uninterrupted prairie for about forty miles—in fact I may say, for five hundred miles, excepting the very narrow fringes of timber along the borders of the streams. The antelope of the high prairies which we now occasionally saw, is sometimes found as far east as Council Grove, and as a few old buffaloes have sometimes been met with about Cottonwood, we now began to look out for this desirable game. Some scattering bulls are generally to be seen first, forming as it would appear the ‘van’ or ‘picket guards’ of the main droves with their cows and calves. The buffalo are usually found much further east early in the spring, than during the

rest of the year, on account of the long grass, which shoots up earlier in the season than the short pasturage of the plains.

Our hopes of game were destined soon to be realized; for early on the second day after leaving Cottonwood (a few miles beyond the principal Turkey creek), our eyes were greeted with the sight of a herd amounting to nearly a hundred head of buffalo, quietly grazing in the distance before us. Half of our company had probably never seen a buffalo before (at least in its wild state); and the excitement that the first sight of these 'prairie beeves' occasions among a party of novices, beggars all description. Every horseman was off in a scamper: and some of the wagoners, leaving their teams to take care of themselves, seized their guns and joined the race afoot. . . .

A few 'beeves' were killed during the chase; and as soon as our camp was pitched, the bustle of kindling fires and preparing for supper commenced. The new adventurers were curious to taste this prairie luxury; while we all had been so long upon salt provisions—now nearly a month—that our appetites were in exquisite condition to relish fresh meat. The fires had scarcely been kindled when the fumes of broiling meat pervaded the surrounding atmosphere; while all huddled about, anxiously watching their cookeries, and regaling their senses in anticipation upon the savory odors which issued from them.

For the edification of the reader, who has no doubt some curiosity on the subject, I will briefly mention, that the 'kitchen and table ware' of the traders usually consists of a skillet, a frying-pan, a sheet-iron camp-kettle, a coffee-pot, and each man with his tin cup and a butcher's knife. The culinary operations being finished, the pan and kettle are set upon the grassy turf, around which all take a 'lowly seat,' and crack their gleesome jokes, while from their greasy hands they swallow their savory viands—all with a relish rarely experienced at the well-spread tables of the most fashionable and wealthy. . . .

Early the next day we reached the 'Little Arkansas,' which, although endowed with an imposing name, is only a small creek with a current but five or six yards wide. But, though small, its steep banks and miry bed annoyed us exceedingly in crossing. It is the practice upon the prairies on all such occasions, for several men to go in advance with axes, spades and mattocks, and, by digging the banks and erecting temporary bridges, to have all in readiness by the time the wagons arrive. A bridge over a quagmire is made in a few minutes, by cross-laying it with brush (willows are best, but even



long grass is often employed as a substitute), and covering it with earth—across which a hundred wagons will often pass in safety. . . .

Half a day's drive . . . brought us to the valley of Arkansas River. This point is about 270 miles from Independence. From the adjacent heights the landscape presents an imposing and picturesque appearance. Beneath a ledge of wave-like yellow sandy ridges and hillocks spreading far beyond, descends the majestic river (averaging at least a quarter of a mile in width), bespeckled with verdant islets, thickly set with cottonwood timber. The banks are very low and barren, with the exception of an occasional grove of stunted trees, hiding behind a swamp or sand-hill, placed there as it were to protect it from the fire of the prairies, which in most parts keeps down every perennial growth. In many places, indeed, where there are no islands, the river is so entirely bare of trees, that the unthinking traveler might approach almost to its very brink, without suspecting its presence.

Thus far, many of the prairies have a fine and productive appearance, though the Neosho River (or Council Grove) seems to form the western boundary of the truly rich and beautiful country of the border. Up to that point the prairies are similar to those of Missouri—the soil equally exuberant and fertile; while all the country that lies beyond, is of a far more barren character—vegetation of every kind is more stinted—the gay flowers more scarce, and the scanty timber of a very inferior quality: indeed, the streams, from Council Grove westward, are lined with very little else than cottonwood, barely interspersed here and there with an occasional elm or hackberry. . . .

. . . Our route lay mostly over a level plain, which usually teems with buffalo, and is beautifully adapted to the chase. At the distance of about fifteen miles, the attention of the traveler is directed to the 'Pawnee Rock,' so called, it is said, on account of a battle's having once been fought hard by, between the Pawnees and some other tribe. It is situated at the projecting point of a ridge, and upon its surface are furrowed, in uncouth but legible characters, numerous dates, and the names of various travelers who have chanced to pass that way.

We encamped at Ash creek, where we again experienced sundry alarms in consequence of 'Indian sign,' that was discovered in the creek valley, such as unextinguished fires, about which were found some old moccasins—a sure indication of the recent retreat of savages from the vicinity. These constant alarms, however, although too



frequently the result of groundless and unmanly fears, are not without their salutary effects upon the party. They serve to keep one constantly on the alert, and to sharpen those faculties of observation which would otherwise become blunted or inactive. Thus far also we had marched in two lines only; but, after crossing the Pawnee Fork, each of the four divisions drove on in a separate file, which became henceforth the order of march till we reached the border of the mountains. By moving in long lines as we did before, the march is continually interrupted; for every accident which delays a wagon ahead stops all those behind. By marching four abreast, this difficulty is partially obviated, and the wagons can also be thrown more readily into a condition of defence in case of attack.

Upon encamping the wagons are formed into a 'hollow square' (each division to a side), constituting at once an enclosure (or *corral*) for the animals when needed, and a fortification against the Indians. Not to embarrass this cattle-pen, the camp fires are all lighted outside of the wagons. Outside of the wagons, also, the travelers spread their beds, which consist, for the most part, of buffalo-rugs and blankets. Many content themselves with a single Mackinaw; but a pair constitutes the most regular pallet; and he that is provided with a buffalo-rug into the bargain, is deemed luxuriously supplied. It is most usual to sleep out in the open air, as well to be at hand in case of attack, as indeed for comfort; for the serene sky of the Prairies affords the most agreeable canopy. That deleterious attribute of night air and dews, so dangerous in other climates, is but little experienced upon the high plains: on the contrary, the serene evening air seems to affect the health rather favorably than otherwise. Tents are so rare on these expeditions that, in a caravan of two hundred men, I have not seen a dozen. In time of rain the traveler resorts to his wagon, which affords a far more secure shelter than a tent; for if the latter is not beaten down by the storms which so often accompany rain upon the prairies, the ground underneath is at least apt to be flooded. During dry weather, however, even the invalid prefers the open air.

Prior to the date of our trip it had been customary to secure the horses by huppling them. The 'fore-hupple' (a leathern strap or rope manacle upon the fore-legs) being most convenient, was more frequently used; though the 'side-line' (a hupple connecting a fore and a hind leg) is the most secure; for with this an animal can hardly increase his pace beyond a hobbling walk; whereas, with a fore-

hobble, a frightened horse will scamper off with nearly as much velocity as though he were unshackled. But, better than either of these is the practice which the caravans have since adopted of tethering the mules at night around the wagons, at proper intervals, with ropes twenty-five or thirty feet in length, tied to stakes fifteen to twenty inches long, driven into the ground; a supply of which, as well as mallets, the wagoners always carry with them. . . .

Although the buffalo had been scarce for a few days—frightened off, no doubt, by the Indians whose ‘sign’ we saw about Ash creek, they soon became exceedingly abundant. The larger droves of these animals are sometimes a source of great annoyance to the caravans, as, by running near our loose stock, there is frequent danger of their causing stampedes (or general scamper), in which case mules, horses and oxen have been known to run away among the buffalo, as though they had been a gang of their own species. A company of traders, in 1824, lost twenty or thirty of their animals in this way. Hunters have also been deprived of their horses in the same way. Leaping from them in haste, in order to take a more determinate aim at a buffalo, the horse has been known to take fright, and, following the fleeing game, has disappeared with saddle, bridle, pistols and all—most probably never to be heard of again. In fact, to look for stock upon these prairies, would be emphatically to ‘search for a needle in a haystack’; not only because they are virtually boundless, but that being everywhere alive with herds of buffalo, from which horses cannot be distinguished at a distance, one knows not whither to turn in search after the stray animals.

We had lately been visited by frequent showers of rain, and upon observing the Arkansas River, it was found to be rising, which seemed portentous of the troubles which the ‘June freshet’ might occasion us in crossing it; and, as it was already the 11th of this month, this annual occurrence was now hourly expected. On some occasions caravans have been obliged to construct what is called a ‘buffalo-boat,’ which is done by stretching the hides of these animals over a frame of poles, or, what is still more common, over an empty wagon-body. The ‘June freshets,’ however, are seldom of long duration; and, during the greatest portion of the year, the channel is very shallow. Still the bed of the river being in many places filled with quicksand, it is requisite to examine and mark out the best ford with stakes, before one undertakes to cross. The wagons are

then driven over, usually by double teams, which should never be permitted to stop, else animals and wagons are apt to founder, and the loading is liable to be damaged. I have witnessed a whole team down at once, rendering it necessary to unharness and drag each mule out separately: in fact, more than common exertion is sometimes required to prevent these dumpish animals from drowning in their fright and struggles through the water, though the current be but shallow at the place. Hence it is that oxen are much safer for fording streams than mules. As for ourselves, we forded the river without serious difficulty.

Rattlesnakes are proverbially abundant upon all these prairies, and as there is seldom to be found either stick or stone with which to kill them, one hears almost a constant popping of rifles or pistols among the vanguard, to clear the route of these disagreeable occupants, lest they should bite our animals. As we were toiling up through the sandy hillocks which border the southern banks of the Arkansas, the day being exceedingly warm, we came upon a perfect den of these reptiles. I will not say 'thousands,' though this perhaps were nearer the truth—but hundreds at least were coiled or crawling in every direction. They were no sooner discovered than we were upon them with guns and pistols, determined to let none of them escape.

In the midst of this amusing scramble among the snakes, a wild mustang colt, which had, somehow or other, become separated from its dam, came bolting among our relay of loose stock to add to the confusion. One of our mules, evidently impressed with the impertinence of the intruder, sprang forward and attacked it, with the apparent intention of executing summary chastisement; while another mule, with more benignity of temper than its irascible compeer, engaged most lustily in defence of the unfortunate little mustang. As the contest was carried on among the wagons, the teamsters soon became very uproarious, so that the whole, with the snake fracas, made up a capital scene of confusion. When the mule skirmish would have ended, if no one had interfered, is a question which remained undetermined; for some of our company, in view of the consequences that might result from the contest, rather inhumanly took sides with the assailing mule; and soon after they entered the lists, a rifle ball relieved the poor colt from its earthly embarrassments, and the company from further domestic disturb-



ance. Peace once more restored, we soon got under way, and that evening pitched our camp opposite the celebrated 'Caches,' a place where some of the earliest adventurers had been compelled to conceal their merchandise.

Reprinted from *Commerce of the Prairies*, New York: J. J. & H. G. Langley, 1845.

## *Along the Kaw Trail*

by GEORGE P. MOREHOUSE

[George P. Morehouse came to Kansas from Illinois in 1871. He grew up on a ranch in Morris County, had his later schooling in New York, and was admitted to the bar in 1889. While a member of the Kansas legislature, he introduced the bill which made the sunflower the state flower.]

THE HISTORY of most of the overland highways of the West has been written. Being the routes of freighting, mail and express lines, white men know all about them. Some of the border tribes had well-defined trails over which they passed to and from their hunting-grounds and to engage in warfare. One of the most important and well known of these was the Kaw Indian trail, which traversed what is now included in the counties of Morris, Marion, McPherson, and Rice. Living for many years on this trail, in the southwest part of Morris county, when a boy, and daily crossing or following along portions of its course, makes me fairly familiar with its history and use, and, when in doubt, [one] can ascertain the facts from old settlers, who have lived in Morris county since the '40's, and who have the fullest knowledge of all the movements of that peculiar tribe of Indians. Some have erroneously traced its course south from the Kaw reservation across Chase county, and on to the Arkansas. The real Kaw trail, and the only one the Kaws and our old-timers knew about, is still visible in many places, and was started and used under the following circumstances: The Kaw or Kansas Indians lived for a long time in the Kaw valley east of the present city of Manhattan. In 1847 they were moved to a reservation in the Neosho valley, adjoining Council Grove. Their three villages were down the river, and the Indian agency, the buildings of which still stand, was near the mouth of Big John creek, about four miles from Council Grove.

They had three separate villages, governed in a manner by three



chiefs. Al-le-ga-wa-ho, for many years their wisest leader, a man over six feet tall and noted as an eloquent Indian orator, presided at the village located on Cahola creek. Kah-he-ga-wa-ti-an-gah, the "fool chief," governed the village near the present site of the town of Dunlap. Wah-ti-an-gah held forth as chief at the village near the official agency. The "fool chief" was usually the hereditary principal chief, and it was a high and honorable title. Originally it was obtained by some remarkable act of bravery, daring, Indian prowess, even to being rash and fool-hardy; hence the term. The "fool chief" only maintained his distinction by continued personal courage, generosity, and good conduct, and also by being wise in counsel.

Annually the Kaws went hunting out to the great imperial pasture-grounds of the buffalo, and going back and forth wore a well-defined trail. It started from their headquarters, near the mouth of Big John creek, four miles southeast of Council Grove, and bore almost west, a little southwest, crossing Diamond creek within a few rods of the present site of the railway station at Diamond Springs. It entered Marion county near the old post-office of Bethel, on the head of Middle creek, and not far from the present site of the town of Lincolnville. From there it passed westward through Marion county and almost through the center of McPherson county, and on to the forks of Cow creek, about three miles south of the present town of Lyons, near the center of Rice county. This was its western terminus, and for many years right in the heart of the finest buffalo-hunting country, which, for a long time, by common consent, was given up to the use of the Kaws.

Here they established their camp, pitched their teepees, dried their meat, and cured their furs and robes. The Kaws were great on "buffalo jerk" and prepared large quantities at their Cow creek camping-grounds. This was done by stripping or jerking buffalo meat into convenient strips, which were cured without salt in the sun and dry atmosphere of that region, by hanging on slender poles supported by forked sticks. It was quite an article of commerce and, baled up and packed home on ponies, frequently came into the hands of white men. My boyish tastes thought a piece of buffalo jerk was a toothsome morsel while riding around or hunting. They went out over this trail in early fall, many taking their families, and often stayed all winter.

One of the reasons for going out to the rich buffalo-grass region was to winter their ponies; for the blue-stem prairie-grass of Morris

county was poor pasture after the fall frosts. Some returned late in fall, their pack ponies laden with fresh and dried meat, for the use of those of the tribe who had remained at home. The fresh buffalo saddles were often brought in with the skin on to keep them clean. Frequently, friendly white men went along to hunt and trade, and brought back meat and furs. In this way the Kaw trail became, to a degree, a wagon road, and it was used as such for several years, until blocked by the fences of the settlers. It was a very direct route in its direction, and finally the old star mail route between Council Grove and Marion (Center) used this trail over much of its course. This supplied the early post-offices of Hill Spring, Diamond Springs, Bethel, Lincolnville, and some others.

The Diamond Springs post-office mentioned is not the famous Diamond Springs on the Santa Fe trail at the head of Diamond creek, but the post-office five miles below, and near the present village of Diamond Springs.

This not being understood has caused mistaken ideas as to the course and crossing-place of the Santa Fe trail and Kaw trail over Diamond creek.

The Kaws might have traveled to and from their Cow creek hunting-grounds on the Santa Fe trail, but they wanted a road of their own. Their trail was almost parallel with that noted highway, from three to six miles south, but over a more broken country. It was more direct, for the Santa Fe trail wound around to keep on the higher divides, while the Kaw trail was almost "as straight as the crow flies," going up and down hills, across sharp ridges, when a slight detour would have avoided heavy pulls. We often wondered why these Indians were so set on keeping in this "straight and narrow path" over the roughest ground, when smoother land was to the north. A ruler placed on a map of Kansas, one end about three miles south of Council Grove and the other end about three miles south of Lyons, indicates very closely the exact course of this trail. It was not a single path, but in places the ground was cut up for a rod or two in width, and had many evidences of long usage.

We used to find sundry relics along this trail, for the Indians were not exempt from losing things.

Few of the Kaws ever had first-class firearms of any sort to hunt with. Their rifles were single-barrel, muzzle-loading, and of inferior grade. While most of them had rifles, I have seen them go on these hunts armed with only their trusty bow and arrows and belt knife. I

never doubted their ability to kill the buffalo with these simple-looking bows and little arrows after witnessing them kill a number of wild Texas cows in that primitive manner.

The Kaws were not noted for the best breed of ponies, but it was always said that when they returned from these western trips they had usually greatly improved their stock, bringing back some fine specimens, whether by trading or at the expense of the Cheyennes or other Indians the deponent saith not. They ordinarily traveled along the trail in single file, and, when returning, the pack ponies reeled under the weight of plunder or tugged at loads borne on two long poles fastened to their sides and extending back like long shafts, dragging on the ground. Often on top of a load of fresh or dried meat a squaw and papoose would be perched, in all the glory of Indian life. The braves rode the best ponies, and some of them were beauties and very hardy, and some of them made good cattle ponies. I once owned one, understood to be a Cheyenne pony, that could travel all day on a brisk canter, and cover from seventy to eighty miles with ease. The Kaws always brought back large quantities of buffalo hides and other skins and furs. A trader once told me that he bought in one season nearly 1000 buffalo hides from that tribe. While they were good hunters, they never excelled in making the finest robes. A fine Cheyenne robe was worth as much as fifteen dollars, but half that sum was a good price for a Kaw robe. Traders often went out to their Cow creek camp to buy their products, and, in fact, they always liked to have some white hunters along, for it was a protection against trouble from other tribes. Sometimes the traders would have some Missouri apples, and the going rate was a red apple for a muskrat skin.

Indians were great lovers of apples, and my brother once traded a double-handful for a fine pair of beaded moccasins.

At first, when some of the early settlers fenced the bottom lands, through which the Kaw trail passed, the Indians resented it and summarily destroyed the fences and passed on. They felt that this old pathway was sacred and no one had a right to obstruct it. They said: "Have we not used it these many years, long before the white man appeared, and is it not ours? Along this trail are scattered the graves of our departed kindred and some of the great and wise men of our tribe. Does this not give us the first right, and is there not room for the white man's field, without saying to the Indian, 'You must not pass along the old trail of your fathers?' "



I often noticed these graves, usually on the top of some near bluff, or high ground, and they were often covered with slabs of limestone, and invariably, the bones of the pony that was sacrificed at the burial marked the spot. In many places along this trail, on the highest points they had erected crude monuments, piles of rocks which were visible for a long distance. This was done when the trail was first used, in order to direct the proper course. These, with some of the marked graves, will soon be all that will indicate its location and history; for most of the inhabitants along its route know little or nothing about it.

When the Cheyennes, under Little Robe, in 1868, made their famous raid into Morris county to fight the Kaws, they followed over most of this trail in coming and going. For several years after the Indians left, the settlers used the trail as a starting-point to burn backfires against the consuming prairie conflagrations so destructive in those days. After and even before the Kaws were removed to the territory, in 1873, it was often the route of some of the great cattle drives which used to be made to Council Grove from the West; for this trail had better grass and water along it than the Santa Fe trail. From the Kaw reservation to their Cow creek camp was 100 miles, very picturesque and varied, crossing numerous creeks and fine watering-places, the principal ones of which were Four Mile, Diamond, Middle, Clear and Muddy creeks, Cottonwood river, Turkey creek, Little Arkansas river, and Cow creek.

For many years the Kaws claimed the territory now embraced in Marion, Dickinson, McPherson, Saline, Rice and Ellsworth counties as their exclusive hunting grounds, and their trouble with other tribes was caused because this claim was disputed. At some of these creek crossings, where their most favorable camping-grounds were located, their wigwam poles were often left standing in place, ready for the skin coverings the next time they came along. This saved them work and carrying so many camp equipments. I will have to confess that we boys were wont to pull them up and carry them away at times.

When the cavalcade of returning Kaws reached their home villages near Council Grove, great was their reception by those who had remained at home. It meant a feast of fat things—buffalo meat (fresh and dried), venison steaks and stews. It meant buffalo-robcs, deer and wolf skins, and other peltries, to be sold or wrought into needed garments and coverings. Besides, there was a sort of general rejoicing



by the entire tribe, that the hunters had been prospered with success and safely returned to their secure and comfortable lodges along the timber-lined banks of the sheltering Neosho. After the usual Indian salutations, the robes, skins and meats were properly stored or hung up for use. Later on some of these would be brought to Council Grove and traded for those supplies which they craved. This homecoming of the hunters soon wrought up the entire village into a perfect hubbub of excitement. Powwows, great and small, were held, and all the experiences of the hunt related in detail, embellished with the most vivid and boastful language, and it was the opportunity for some of their peculiar dances.

Those braves who had performed special acts of prowess or skill in the chase, or perchance in any personal encounter with their old enemies, the Cheyennes or Pawnees, were given prominent seats in the council circle, and some soon became so puffed up with their importance that they strutted about the villages, and even up to Council Grove, bragging of their valor, and received the plaudits of the tribe.

The Kaws had three principal dances—sun-dance, dog-dance, and war-dance. These dances all had their particular seasons and significance. The sun-dance was always given out-of-doors, and had indications of religious origin. . . . The sun-dance was circular, as most all of their dances, and was accompanied by the usual music, weird songs, and grotesque movements, but they were not dressed up in the hideous costumes worn at the dog-dance or the great war-dance. Squaws often took part in the sun-dance in some of its modifications, and were properly gowned for the high occasion. Their faces were brilliant with vermilion, yellow, and green, while their robes, leggings and dresses scintillated with a unique passementerie of bright beads and skillfully wrought quill and quail-bone work. Their taper arms were decorated with circles of shining brass bracelets and rings of silver, while shells and other ornaments dangled from their dusky ears. All the dress toggery and showy valuables and heirlooms of the tribe were donned in richest profusion by way of personal adornment. The Kaws were always noted for being able to unpack and display a great wealth of dress ornaments, some of which had been handed down in the tribe for generations.

The most handsome natural adornment of the squaws was their jet-black hair, parted in the middle over their heads and down to their necks behind, and ending in two beautiful braids of black.

Round and round the circle they moved, in single and double lines, and at times their movements were not unlike the dances of the whites.

Forward, around the circle by couples they would go; then the braves would move backward with shuffling step and squaws and girls would follow, and vice versa, while through it all were the monotone songs and the drumming notes of the Indian tambourines.

The dog-dance was often given in honor of visitors, and in many ways was nothing more than a war-dance of modified and abbreviated form.

They were not as particular to dress in such fanciful and hideous costumes as in the war-dance, but often made as much noise. None but braves took part in the dog-dance, which at times was performed in the largest lodges, but usually outside, and always around a fire.

They would rush into a lodge containing strangers with such fierce yells that it was frightful to hear. After shrill songs, they performed the circular movement to the music of rattles, drums, and the Indian flutes or whistles. After they had exhausted themselves, they rushed out and away as suddenly as they came, and it was all over for that day.

The Kaws on these occasions had three musical instruments—the usual tomtom or drum, strings of rattles, and the flute or whistle.

The drums were really enlarged forms of tambourines, made of a wooden frame, over which, on one end, was stretched prepared green buffalo hide, which, when dried and properly pounded with a stick, sent forth sonorous and stirring sounds. Strings of dried deer's feet were used as rattles, but the best were the gourd rattles. These were made by taking small dried gourds and by placing bullets or pebbles inside, and when deftly shaken produced a quick, rattling sound, which was peculiar to the castanets of these primitive people. The Kaws made and used a wind instrument, a sort of Indian flute, and some were deft in executing a subdued music for the more plaintive and weird parts of their dances and ceremonies.

By far the most interest attached to the great war- or scalp-dance, for in this ceremony entered the strongest emotions of the tribe. If some of the returned warriors over the trail had brought proof of their boasted valor—some fine ponies or a few scalp-locks that once belonged to a hereditary foe of the tribe, which had been met and vanquished—great was the rejoicing, and the elements for a first-

class war-dance existed. As the day advanced, the entire tribe seemed to become oblivious to everything except the increasing excitement and the Indian fervor displayed. The chief warriors paraded through the villages and visited the principal lodges. They were followed by shouting, singing mobs of admirers, who related their deeds of valor and chanted their praises. Decrepit old braves and squaws came forth and blessed them, while the more active and younger squaws prepared a feast of the choicest meats for the heroes of their families and protectors of the tribe.

During the day the young men cut and piled a huge pyramid of wood, and all preparations were completed for the great war-dance. Frequently parties from Council Grove went down to witness the unique scene. Stripped to the waist, in the seclusion of their lodges, the braves performed their fantastic toilets, by painting their dark skins with wonderful dotted and striped combinations of vermilion, yellow, green, and black.

The Kaws were among the few tribes whose braves shaved their heads. They only left a comb or elongated tuft on top of the head extending back over the scalp-lock. Their only garments were clout, leggings, and moccasins. The war head-dress was also worn, being a band around the head, upon which were often attached two cow horns, and extending down their backs a plait or line of turkey or eagle feathers. Some sported necklaces of bears' claws or elk teeth. Each one carried a full complement of arms—bows and arrows, lance, and often a shield, from which hung any prized scalps they possessed. The measured tones of the sounding drums announce that all is ready; the fires are lighted, and the hideous painted and decorated braves come rushing out of the lodges and wigwams with shrieks and war-cries that none will ever forget. In the full panoply of all this hideousness, they quickly gather in a circle around the blazing fire. For a time they stand and go through all varieties of yells and mingled war-whoops of triumph and delight, which echo along the valley. The leader of the band raises his lance and strikes three times on the ground or upon a shield, the musicians make some extra flourishes with the rattles and drums, and the great war-dance is on in full blast. Round and round the roaring fire they circle, now following each other, and now facing the center, their painted and decorated bodies swaying up and down, in and out, in exact time to the peculiar rhythm of the music.

Their odd, hitching step was a sort of forward-now-backward



movement, as if they wanted to advance but could not—one knee stiff and the other bent; and with a monotonous regularity they uttered their war songs, the principal vocal accompaniment and continuous repetition of which was “hi’yi, hi’-yi,” *ad infinitum*, with strong accent on the first syllable. No matter how long the dance lasted, usually through the night and far into the following day, this monotonous utterance never varied, but was, of course, interspersed with other shouts, whoops, and yells, as well as songs. At times their voices seemed to fail, and the howlings lapsed into a drone of measured and subdued tones and the chanting songs ceased, but the “hi’yi, hi’-yi,” went on continuously; neither was there any cessation of rattling gourds nor the throbbing and heavy undertones of the drums until the dance ended. At times the musicians would enter the great circle and march around the fire in contrary direction to the moving mass. Now, some one would step out and chant the deeds of some particular brave, and all the dancers and all outside the charmed circle would take up the strain and renewed excitement prevailed. The march is quickened, the shrill war whoops rise high above the monotonous din, while the clashing shields and fluttering scalp-locks work them again to a perfect frenzy of tribal fervor, in which all engage—the squaws, old men, boys, and maidens, as well as the regular dancers.

After a dance was over the ground was marked for a long time by the continuous circling, which left a beaten ring, something like a horse-power or the circle of an abandoned circus ring. The dance was usually held in the sheltering opening of some heavy grove near the river. The blazing firelight, the flitting shadows and all the weird and mixed variety of unusual sights and sounds created an impression upon a casual visitor long to be remembered. . . .

Reprinted from *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society*, 1903-1904.

## *On the Oregon Trail*

by FRANCIS PARKMAN

[Francis Parkman was an American historian. Just out of Harvard, he made a trip over the Oregon Trail in 1846. His account of the trail and his experiences is a classical work on western travel of that day.]

EMERGING from the mud-holes of Westport, we pursued our way for some time along the narrow track, in the checkered sunshine and

shadow of the woods, till at length, issuing into the broad light, we left behind us the farthest outskirts of the great forest, that once spread from the western plains to the shore of the Atlantic. Looking over an intervening belt of bushes, we saw the green, ocean-like expanse of prairie, stretching swell beyond swell to the horizon.

It was a mild, calm spring day; a day when one is more disposed to musing and revery than to action, and the softest part of his nature is apt to gain the upper hand. I rode in advance of the party, as we passed through the bushes, and, as a nook of green grass offered a strong temptation, I dismounted and lay down there. All the trees and saplings were in flower, or budding into fresh leaf; the red clusters of the maple-blossoms and the rich flowers of the Indian apple were there in profusion; and I was half inclined to regret leaving behind the land of gardens for the rude and stern scenes of the prairie and the mountains.

Meanwhile the party came in sight out of the bushes. Foremost rode Henry Chatillon, our guide and hunter, a fine athletic figure, mounted on a hardy gray Wyandot pony. He wore a white blanket-coat, a broad hat of felt, moccasins, and trousers of deer-skin, ornamented along the seams with rows of long fringes. His knife was stuck in his belt; his bullet-pouch and powder-horn hung at his side, and his rifle lay before him, resting against the high pommel of his saddle, which, like all his equipment, had seen hard service, and was much the worse for wear. Shaw followed close, mounted on a little sorrel horse, and leading a larger animal by a rope. His outfit, which resembled mine, had been provided with a view to use rather than ornament. It consisted of a plain, black Spanish saddle, with holsters of heavy pistols, a blanket rolled up behind, and the trail-rope attached to his horse's neck hanging coiled in front. He carried a double-barrelled smooth-bore, while I had a rifle of some fifteen pounds' weight. At that time our attire, though far from elegant, bore some marks of civilization, and offered a very favorable contrast to the inimitable shabbiness of our appearance on the return journey. A red flannel shirt, belted around the waist like a frock, then constituted our upper garment; moccasins had supplanted our failing boots; and the remaining essential portion of our attire consisted of an extraordinary article, manufactured by a squaw out of smoked buckskin. Our muleteer, Deslauriers, brought up the rear with his cart, wading ankle-deep in the mud, alternately puffing at his pipe, and ejaculating in his prairie patois, "*Sacré enfant de*

*garce!*" as one of the mules would seem to recoil before some abyss of unusual profundity. The cart was of the kind that one may see by scores around the market-place at Quebec, and had a white covering to protect the articles within. These were our provisions and a tent, with ammunition, blankets, and presents for the Indians.

We were in all four men with eight animals; for besides the spare horses led by Shaw and myself, an additional mule was driven along with us as a reserve in case of accident. . . .

We were soon free of the woods and bushes, and fairly upon the broad prairie. Now and then a Shawanoe passed us, riding his little shaggy pony at a "lope;" his calico shirt, his gaudy sash, and the gay handkerchief bound around his snaky hair, fluttering in the wind. At noon we stopped to rest not far from a little creek, replete with frogs and young turtles. There had been an Indian encampment at the place, and the framework of the lodges still remained, enabling us very easily to gain a shelter from the sun, by merely spreading one or two blankets over them. Thus shaded, we sat upon our saddles, and Shaw for the first time lighted his favorite Indian pipe; while Deslauriers was squatted over a hot bed of coals, shading his eyes with one hand, and holding a little stick in the other, with which he regulated the hissing contents of a frying-pan. The horses were turned to feed among the scattered bushes of a low oozy meadow. A drowsy spring-like sultriness pervaded the air, and the voices of ten thousand young frogs and insects, just awakened into life, rose in varied chorus from the creek and the meadows.

Scarcely were we seated when a visitor approached. This was an old Kansas Indian; a man of distinction, if one might judge from his dress. His head was shaved and painted red, and from the tuft of hair remaining on the crown dangled several eagle's feathers, and the tails of two or three rattlesnakes. His cheeks, too, were daubed with vermilion; his ears were adorned with green glass pendants; a collar of grizzly bears' claws surrounded his neck, and several large necklaces of wampum hung on his breast. Having shaken us by the hand with a grunt of salutation, the old man, dropping his red blanket from his shoulders, sat down cross-legged on the ground. We offered him a cup of sweetened water, at which he ejaculated "Good!" and was beginning to tell us how great a man he was, and how many Pawnees he had killed, when suddenly a motley concourse appeared wading across the creek towards us. They filed past in rapid succession, men, women, and children: some were on horse-



back, some on foot, but all were alike squalid and wretched. Old squaws, mounted astride of shaggy, meagre little ponies, with perhaps one or two snake-eyed children seated behind them, clinging to their tattered blankets; tall lank young men on foot, with bows and arrows in their hands; and girls whose native ugliness not all the charms of glass beads and scarlet cloth could disguise, made up the procession; although here and there was a man who, like our visitor, seemed to hold some rank in this respectable community. They were the dregs of the Kansas nation, who, while their betters were gone to hunt the buffalo, had left the village on a begging expedition to Westport.

When this ragamuffin horde had passed, we caught our horses, saddled, harnessed, and resumed our journey. Forging the creek, the low roofs of a number of rude buildings appeared, rising from a cluster of groves and woods on the left; and riding up through a long lane amid a profusion of wild roses and early spring flowers, we found the log church and schoolhouses belonging to the Methodist Shawanoe Mission. The Indians were on the point of gathering to a religious meeting. Some scores of them, tall men in half-civilized dress, were seated on wooden benches under the trees; while their horses were tied to the sheds and fences. Their chief, Parks, a remarkably large and athletic man, had just arrived from Westport, where he owns a trading establishment. Besides this, he has a large farm and a considerable number of slaves. Indeed, the Shawanoes have made greater progress in agriculture than any other tribe on the Missouri frontier; and both in appearance and in character form a marked contrast to our late acquaintance, the Kansas.

A few hours' ride brought us to the banks of the river Kansas. Traversing the woods that lined it, and ploughing through the deep sand, we encamped not far from the bank, at the Lower Delaware crossing. Our tent was erected for the first time, on a meadow close to the woods, and the camp preparations being complete, we began to think of supper. An old Delaware woman, of some three hundred pounds' weight, sat in the porch of a little log-house, close to the water, and a very pretty half-breed girl was engaged, under her superintendence, in feeding a large flock of turkeys that were fluttering and gobbling about the door. But no offers of money, or even of tobacco, could induce her to part with one of her favorites; so I took my rifle, to see if the woods or the river could furnish us anything. A multitude of quails were plaintively whistling in the mead-

ows; but nothing appropriate to the rifle was to be seen, except three buzzards, seated on the spectral limbs of an old dead sycamore, that thrust itself out over the river from the dense sunny wall of fresh foliage. Their ugly heads were drawn down between their shoulders, and they seemed to luxuriate in the soft sunshine that was pouring from the west. As they offered no epicurean temptations, I refrained from disturbing their enjoyment; but contented myself with admiring the calm beauty of the sunset—for the river, eddying swiftly in deep purple shadows between the impending woods, formed a wild but tranquillizing scene.

When I returned to the camp, I found Shaw and an old Indian seated on the ground in close conference, passing the pipe between them. The old man was explaining that he loved the whites, and had an especial partiality for tobacco. Deslauriers was arranging upon the ground our service of tin cups and plates; and as other viands were not to be had, he set before us a repast of biscuit and bacon, and a large pot of coffee. Unsheathing our knives, we attacked it, disposed of the greater part, and tossed the residue to the Indian. Meanwhile our horses, now hobbled for the first time, stood among the trees, with their forelegs tied together, in great disgust and astonishment. They seemed by no means to relish this foretaste of what awaited them. Mine, in particular, had conceived a mortal aversion to the prairie life. One of them, christened Hendrick, an animal whose strength and hardihood were his only merits, and who yielded to nothing but the cogent arguments of the whip, looked toward us with an indignant countenance, as if he meditated avenging his wrongs with a kick. The other, Pontiac, a good horse, though of plebeian lineage, stood with his head drooping and his mane hanging about his eyes, with the grieved and sulky air of a lubberly boy sent off to school. His forebodings were but too just; for when I last heard from him, he was under the lash of an Ogillallah brave, on a war-party against the Crows.

As it grew dark and the voices of the whippoorwills succeeded the whistle of the quails, we removed our saddles to the tent to serve as pillows, spread our blankets upon the ground, and prepared to bivouac for the first time that season. Each man selected the place in the tent which he was to occupy for the journey. To Deslauriers, however, was assigned the cart into which he could creep in wet weather, and find a much better shelter than his *bourgeois* enjoyed in the tent.

The river Kansas at this point forms the boundary-line between the country of the Shawanoes and that of the Delawares. We crossed it on the following day, rafting over our horses and equipments with much difficulty, and unlading our cart in order to make our way up the steep ascent on the farther bank. It was a Sunday morning; warm, tranquil, and bright; and a perfect stillness reigned over the rough enclosures and neglected fields of the Delawares, except the ceaseless hum and chirruping of myriads of insects. Now and then an Indian rode past on his way to the meeting-house, or, through the dilapidated entrance of some shattered log-house, an old woman might be discerned enjoying all the luxury of idleness. There was no village bell, for the Delawares have none; and yet upon that forlorn and rude settlement was the same spirit of Sabbath repose and tranquillity as in some New England village among the mountains of New Hampshire, or the Vermont woods.

A military road led from this point to Fort Leavenworth, and for many miles the farms and cabins of the Delawares were scattered at short intervals on either hand. The little rude structures of logs erected usually on the borders of a tract of woods made a picturesque feature in the landscape. But the scenery needed no foreign aid. Nature had done enough for it; and the alternation of rich green prairies and groves that stood in clusters, or lined the banks of the numerous little streams, had all the softened and polished beauty of a region that has been for centuries under the hand of man. At that early season, too, it was in the height of its freshness. The woods were flushed with the red buds of the maple; there were frequent flowering shrubs unknown in the east; and the green swells of the prairie were thickly studded with blossoms.

Encamping near a spring, by the side of a hill, we resumed our journey in the morning, and early in the afternoon were within a few miles of Fort Leavenworth. The road crossed a stream densely bordered with trees, and running in the bottom of a deep woody hollow. We were about to descend into it when a wild and confused procession appeared, passing through the water below, and coming up the steep ascent towards us. We stopped to let them pass. They were Delawares, just returned from a hunting expedition. All, both men and women, were mounted on horseback, and drove along with them a considerable number of pack-mules, laden with the furs they had taken, together with the buffalo-robcs, kettles, and other articles of their traveling equipment, which, as well as their



clothing and their weapons, had a worn and dingy look, as if they had seen hard service of late. At the rear of the party was an old man, who, as he came up, stopped his horse to speak to us. He rode a tough shaggy pony, with mane and tail well knotted with burrs, and a rusty Spanish bit in its mouth, to which, by way of reins, was attached a string of raw hide. His saddle, robbed probably from a Mexican, had no covering, being merely a tree of the Spanish form, with a piece of grizzly bear's skin laid over it, a pair of rude wooden stirrups attached, and, in the absence of girth, a throng of hide passing around the horse's belly. The rider's dark features and keen snaky eye were unequivocally Indian. He wore a buckskin frock, which, like his fringed leggins, was well polished and blackened by grease and long service, and an old handkerchief was tied around his head. Resting on the saddle before him lay his rifle, a weapon in the use of which the Delawares are skillful, though, from its weight, the distant prairie Indians are too lazy to carry it.

"Who's your chief?" he immediately inquired.

Henry Charillon pointed to us. The old Delaware fixed his eyes intently upon us for a moment, and then sententiously remarked—

"No good! Too young!" With this flattering comment he left us and rode after his people.

This tribe, the Delawares, once the peaceful allies of William Penn, the tributaries of the conquering Iroquois, are now the most adventurous and dreaded warriors upon the prairies. They make war upon remote tribes, the very names of which were unknown to their fathers in their ancient seats in Pennsylvania, and they push these new quarrels with true Indian rancor, sending out their war-parties as far as the Rocky Mountains, and into the Mexican territories. Their neighbors and former confederates, the Shawanoes, who are tolerable farmers, are in a prosperous condition; but the Delawares dwindle every year, from the number of men lost in their warlike expeditions.

Soon after leaving this party we saw, stretching on the right, the forests that follow the course of the Missouri, and the deep woody channel through which at this point it runs. At a distance in front were the white barracks of Fort Leavenworth, just visible through the trees upon an eminence above a bend of the river.

From *The Oregon Trail*.

# *The Pony Express*

by SAMUEL CLEMENS

[Samuel L. Clemens, whose major writings appear under the pen name Mark Twain, has left to America priceless transcripts of American life at home and abroad. The outbreak of the Civil War ended Sam's career as a pilot on the Mississippi, and his brother Orion, whom President Lincoln had appointed secretary to the governor of the Nevada territory, took Sam along as his own secretary. The trip was made overland by stage, and out of this trip and his later experiences in mining camps grew *Roughing It*, one of his best books.]

IN A LITTLE WHILE all interest was taken up in stretching our necks and watching for the "pony-rider"—the fleet messenger who sped across the continent from St. Joe to Sacramento, carrying letters nineteen hundred miles in eight days! Think of that for perishable horse and human flesh and blood to do! The pony-rider was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance. No matter what time of the day or night his watch came on, and no matter whether it was winter or summer, raining, or snowing, hailing, or sleeting, or whether his "beat" was a level straight road or a crazy trail over mountain crags and precipices, or whether it led through peaceful regions or regions that swarmed with hostile Indians, he must be always ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind! There was no idling-time for a pony-rider on duty. He rode fifty miles without stopping, by daylight, moonlight, starlight, or through the blackness of darkness—just as it happened. He rode a splendid horse that was born for a racer and fed and lodged like a gentleman; kept him at his utmost speed for ten miles, and then, as he came crashing up to the station where stood two men holding fast a fresh, impatient steed, the transfer of rider and mail-bag was made in the twinkling of an eye, and away flew the eager pair and were out of sight before the spectator could get hardly the ghost of a look. Both rider and horse went "flying light." The rider's dress was thin, and fitted close; he wore a "roundabout," and a skull-cap, and tucked his pantaloons into his boot-tops like a race-rider. He carried no arms—he carried nothing that was not absolutely necessary, for even the postage on his literary freight was worth *five dollars a letter*. He got but little frivolous correspondence to carry—his bag had business letters in it, mostly. His horse was stripped of all unnecessary weight,

too. He wore a little wafer of a racing-saddle, and no visible blanket. He wore light shoes, or none at all. The little flat mail-pockets strapped under the rider's thighs would each hold about the bulk of a child's primer. They held many and many an important business chapter and newspaper letter, but these were written on paper as airy and thin as gold-leaf, nearly, and thus bulk and weight were economized. The stagecoach traveled about a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five miles a day (twenty-four hours), the pony-rider about two hundred and fifty. There were about eighty pony-riders in the saddle all the time, night and day, stretching in a long, scattering procession from the Missouri to California, forty flying eastward, and forty toward the west, and among them making four hundred gallant horses earn a stirring livelihood and see a deal of scenery every single day in the year.

We had had a consuming desire, from the beginning, to see a pony-rider, but somehow or other all that passed us and all that met us managed to streak by in the night, and so we heard only a whiz and a hail, and the swift phantom of the desert was gone before we could get our heads out of the windows. But now we were expecting one along every moment, and would see him in broad daylight. Presently the driver exclaims:

"HERE HE COMES!"

Every neck is stretched further, and every eye strained wider. Away across the endless dead level of the prairie a black speck appears against the sky, and it is plain that it moves. Well, I should think so! In a second or two it becomes a horse and rider, rising and falling, rising and falling—sweeping toward us nearer and nearer—growing more and more distinct, more and more sharply defined—nearer and still nearer, and the flutter of the hoofs comes faintly to the ear—another instant a whoop and a hurrah from our upper deck, a wave of the rider's hand, but no reply, and man and horse burst past our excited faces, and go swinging away like a belated fragment of a storm!

So sudden is it all, and so like a flash of unreal fancy, that but for the flake of white foam left quivering and perishing on a mail-sack after the vision had flashed by and disappeared, we might have doubted whether we had seen any actual horse and man at all, maybe.

Reprinted from *Roughing It*, Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1871.



## II.

# Years of Violence

*The enactment of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854 organized Kansas and Nebraska into territories and left to the people of each territory the question of slavery. From the outset the South had no hopes of making Nebraska a slave state and centered its efforts on Kansas. The political and physical struggle which ensued was a curtain raiser to the War between the States, which followed seven years later. Kansas became a battleground and was known throughout the nation as "Bleeding Kansas." In 1855 occurred the Wakarusa War and the next year, probably the most violent period, the Sacking of Lawrence, the Pottawatomie Massacre, and the Destruction of Osawatomie. The North was probably stirred most by the Marais des Cygnes Massacre in 1858. In 1861 Kansas was admitted as a state, but border warfare continued and in 1863 Quantrill attempted to wipe out Lawrence.*

### *John Brown and the Kansas Conflict*

by JUDGE L. D. BAILEY

[L. D. Bailey was born in New Hampshire and came to Kansas in 1857 at the age of thirty-eight. Already he had practiced law in the East and had taken part in the California gold rush. In Kansas he was a member of the territorial legislature, and a later associate justice of the supreme court. He lived at Emporia, Lawrence, Lyndon, and Garden City, and was active in many state and local affairs.]

JOHN BROWN was a star actor in the Kansas drama, and unquestionably the most sensational of them all. He was an old man when he first came to Kansas, yet this was his first appearance upon any stage. In making his debut here he was supported by his six sons, who seemed to be entirely subject to his influence and control, which seemed to have much of personal magnetism. His sons, and afterwards the other men, who came within the sphere of his personality, appeared to act blindly and zealously under his guidance and direction unmindful of consequences. John Brown was a phenomenon and the paradox of the nineteenth century. He had no personal ambition but was entirely dominated and controlled by one idea—in

tense hatred of slavery, not in Kansas, merely, but throughout the nation and the world. He was a lineal descendant of the Pilgrims who in 1620 landed on Plymouth Rock and made their homes in a savage and hospitable wilderness from their intense devotion to the idea of freedom. John Brown's devotion to the freedom of the colored race amounted to fanaticism, and hence he was not popular with many of the early settlers of Kansas, who came to make Kansas a free state and make their homes in it. They cared less for the negro than they did for themselves while he forgot himself in his intense devotion to the slave. Many thought him insane, and from their standpoint he was so.

"Great zeal to madness nearly is allied,  
And their partitions this from that divide" [*sic*].

So Festus said to St. Paul that "Much learning hath made thee mad," and it is doubtless true that men often become so deeply impressed with the vast importance of some 'one idea' that they seem to others, not so impressed, to be beside themselves. But John Brown was no common madman, as his career both in Kansas and at Harper's Ferry, bore witness; for when after the disastrous defeat and collapse of his Virginia enterprise he found himself wounded, a prisoner and on trial for his life, he was urged by his counsel to plead insanity and save his life; he not only stoutly refused to do so but stoutly declared that he did not wish to save his life, because he was worth more to be hung than for any other purpose.

But it is time I should tell who John Brown was and what he did in Kansas. He was born at Torrington, Conn., May 9, 1800, and was the sixth in descent from Peter Brown, who was one of the original Plymouth Pilgrims. His grand-father was a captain in the army of the Revolution, and John himself had been engaged in the wool trade in Ohio.

When the trouble began in Kansas he came out with five of his sons and settled near Osawatimie in Miami Co. His sons bought some fine stock and farming implements, took claims and built cabins on them, but the old man was too much absorbed in the slavery question to do much at making a farm or a home. His near neighbors were pro-slavery men, and he kept a close watch on their movements. He had some knowledge of land surveying and carried a compass with him frequently, so that when he saw a gathering that looked suspicious he would come up to them with his compass as if running a line past where they stood. When Lawrence was besieged

in December, 1855, Brown and his four sons were among its defenders, but he held no command.

In May, 1856, Captain Henry Clay Pate came into the territory with about fifty men and captured two of Brown's sons, John Jr. and Jason, whereupon the old man with other sons and men enough to make up a company of twenty, started for their rescue. At Prairie City fifteen miles south of Lawrence, he was joined by Captain Shore with about as many more men, and soon after attacked Pate at a little stream called Black Jack, about fifteen miles south-east of Lawrence. The fight was at long range with rifles and lasted three or four hours, when Captain Pate surrendered with his prisoners and plunder.

About this time, three days after the sack of Lawrence, May 24, 1856, five men living near Pottawatomie Creek not far from the Brown settlement, were taken from their homes at midnight and hacked to pieces with broad swords, or heavy knives similar to those Brown armed his sons with. It was a most horrible affair and the conservative free state men strongly disapproved of it. Col. W. A. Phillips, then correspondent of the New York *Tribune*, reported that the Indians had done it, but everything tended to create the belief that Old John Brown and his sons had done it. It was said that these five men had sent notice to the Browns to leave the territory and had warned the old man if they found him there on a certain day, they would kill him, and the story went that the old man responded grimly: "You will not find me here at that time," and that it was a day or two before the day set for him and his sons to leave that they were called up out of their beds and cut down—much after the manner that the Prophet Samuel "hewed King Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal."

Brown was understood by some to deny all knowledge of this bloody work but to others he is known to have said that "If the killing of those men Doyle and his two sons, Sherman and Wilkinson, was a crime, he was not entirely guiltless."

John Brown Jr. was at that time in command of a company in camp at Ottawa Creek some twenty or thirty miles away, and certainly had no share in the tragedy. When informed of it and all its bloody details, he at once threw up his command of the company and wandered off in a state of mental distraction, in which condition he was taken prisoner, and led in chains behind a mounted soldier



under the burning sun, to Lecompton, where he was thrown into prison.

A few days after this "Pottawatomie Massacre" as it is called, a large body of Missourians attacked Osawatomie, burned some of the houses and plundered the rest. The Browns were not present.

In August, another Missourian army of 500 or 600 men made another raid on Osawatomie and found Old Brown at home as it were, though his real home was about eight miles distant. His son Frederick was killed before any fighting took place. The old captain had about forty men under his command. He took up his position in a wooded ravine near the town and made it very warm for them by means of the long range Sharp's [Sharps] rifles. How many of the invaders were killed was never known with certainty, but I was informed by a fine old Quaker gentleman from Indiana, but who was living with a son at Boonville, Mo., at the time, that four wagon loads of dead and wounded were brought into that town when the army of invasion returned. Brown's party had none killed except his son, killed before the attack was made, but one or two wounded. The town was burned and not a house was left standing. I visited the spot in August, 1857, nearly a year after the fight, and found it about half rebuilt. I counted about 20 heaps of ashes where houses had stood till they had been burned by the invaders.

It was war all over Kansas in the summer and early fall of 1856, until the arrival of Gov. Geary, who was appointed to succeed Gov. Shannon, for the purpose of pacifying the territory, as the presidential election canvass between Buchanan and Fremont, was then progressing and the war in Kansas bid fair to elect Fremont unless a stop could be put to it. Gov. Geary accordingly lost no time doing his best to suppress the Missouri inroads, and also the free state companies that had been organized for self defence.

Old John Brown and several of his sons were at Lawrence in September, and it was at that time that my old farmer friend Abel Yates saw him on the hill known as Mount Oread where the State University now stands, distributing pitchforks behind the breastworks at Ft. Lane, saying they were better in a hand to hand fight than bayonets. But the Missouri army which numbered about 2,700 at that time, never came near enough to be reached with pitchforks as they were met and ordered back by Gov. Geary, who threatened to set the United States troops on them if they refused to go.

In the fall of 1857 and winter of 1858 John Brown and James

Montgomery, afterwards Colonel of a colored regiment in South Carolina, were acting together in Linn and Bourbon counties to protect the free state settlers from the outrages of the Missourians, and P. B. Plumb, now senator, spent much of the time with them. The troubles in that quarter continued until 1858—and when Captain Brown found his presence there no longer needed, he responded to an appeal for help of some slaves near the border, just over the Missouri line. The masters of these slaves becoming alarmed for the safety of their slave property, were about to sell them to be taken down into Texas. Captain Brown, with a few men, rode over the line in the night, took the slave-masters prisoners, took their slaves, wagons and mules and made a forced march back into Kansas, and afterwards a leisurely journey north through Nebraska and Iowa to Chicago, and finally to Cleveland, Ohio, where he sold the wagons and mules at public auction, explaining fully how he came by them and also that whatever money they would bring was needed and to be used to help the seventeen liberated slaves across the lake to Canada, and to start in life there as free men. The teams brought a full price and the new-made freedmen got a good start.

After this Captain Brown came back to Kansas, and I saw him for the first and last time in August, I think, in 1859, at Emporia. His errand was to procure some arms that had been sent out from Boston a year or two before. He brought an order for the arms and I believe got them, and that was probably his last appearance in Kansas. With those arms he went into camp at Tabor, Iowa, and commenced drilling and preparing for his Harper's Ferry raid, but with such careful secrecy that no person ever suspected his designs until the astounding news came of his daring but disastrous attempt and failure. I suppose everybody has a pretty definite idea of his personal appearance from the many pictures of him that have been sold. He was somewhat tall, gaunt, erect and soldierly in appearance with venerable grey hair, full beard and whiskers, and a keen grey eye that once seen was never forgotten.

I was by no means an admirer of him while he was in Kansas, considering him altogether too rash. The fact was he wanted to bring on a collision and crash of arms, believing it to be the only means to extinguish slavery. His attack on Harper's Ferry was doubtless for that purpose, and it must be deemed to have had that effect. He was hung at Charleston, Va., Dec., 1859, and a year or two later a Massachusetts regiment, commanded by Col. Fletcher

Webster, son of Daniel Webster, marched down Broadway, N. Y., singing the ever since famous song "John Brown." Wendell Phillips in this country and Victor Hugo in France exhausted their choicest eloquence in heaping honors upon his name, and perhaps it would not inaptly express the opinion commonly held of him in the North and among the enfranchised negroes of the South to quote the eloquent language of N. P. Willis on the death of Harrison.

"He went with his old stride,  
From glory to glory,  
Till at last he ascended  
Fame's ladder so high,  
From the round at the top  
He just stepped to the sky."

True, the top round of his earthly career was the gallows, but his admirers do not hesitate to quote in reference to him the words of a far mightier pioneer of freedom: "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." I say again that John Brown is the paradox of the nineteenth century.

*From Border Ruffian Troubles in Kansas, 1899.*

## *On Affairs in Kansas*

by RALPH WALDO EMERSON

[Ralph Waldo Emerson, poet, essayist, lecturer, Transcendentalist, and one of the wisest Americans, delivered this speech at the Kansas Relief Meeting in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on September 10, 1856, in the absence of the scheduled speaker. "Unskilled as I am to address a political meeting," said he, "it is impossible for the most recluse to extricate himself from the questions of the times."]

. . . THERE is this peculiarity about the case of Kansas, that all the right is on one side. We hear the screams of hunted wives and children answered by the howl of the butchers. The testimony of telegraphs from St. Louis and the border confirm the worst details. The printed letters of border ruffians avow the facts. When pressed to look at the cause of the mischief in the Kansas laws, the President falters and declines the discussion; but his supporters in the Senate, Mr. Cass, Mr. Geyer, Mr. Hunter, speak out, and declare the in-



tolerable atrocity of the code. It is a maxim that all party spirit produces the incapacity to receive natural impressions from facts; and our recent political history has abundantly borne out the maxim. But these details that have come from Kansas are so horrible, that the hostile press have but one word in reply, namely, that it is all exaggeration, 'tis an Abolition lie. Do the Committee of Investigation say that the outrages have been overstated? Does their dismal catalogue of private tragedies show it? Do the private letters? Is it an exaggeration, that Mr. Hopps of Somerville, Mr. Hoyt of Deerfield, Mr. Jennison of Groton, Mr. Phillips of Berkshire, have been murdered? That Mr. Robinson of Fitchburg has been imprisoned? Rev. Mr. Nute of Springfield seized, and up to this time we have no tidings of his fate?

In these calamities under which they suffer, and the worst which threaten them, the people of Kansas ask for bread, clothes, arms and men, to save them alive, and enable them to stand against these enemies of the human race. They have a right to be helped, for they have helped themselves.

This aid must be sent, and this is not to be doled out as an ordinary charity; but bestowed up to the magnitude of the want, and, as has been elsewhere said, "on the scale of a national action." I think we are to give largely, lavishly, to these men. And we must prepare to do it. We must learn to do with less, live in a smaller tenement, sell our apple-trees, our acres, our pleasant houses. I know people who are making haste to reduce their expenses and pay their debts, not with a view to new accumulations, but in preparation to save and earn for the benefit of the Kansas emigrants.

We must have aid from individuals—we must also have aid from the state. I know that the last legislature refused that aid. I know that lawyers hesitate on technical grounds, and wonder what method of relief the legislature will apply. But I submit that, in a case like this, where citizens of Massachusetts, legal voters here, have emigrated to national territory under the sanction of every law, and are then set on by highwaymen, driven from their new homes, pillaged, and numbers of them killed and scalped, and the whole world knows that this is no accidental brawl, but a systematic war to the knife, and in defiance of all laws and liberties—I submit that the governor and legislature should neither slumber nor sleep till they have found out how to send effectual aid and comfort to these poor farmers, or else should resign their seats to those who can. But first let them

hang the halls of the state-house with black crape, and order funeral service to be said for the citizens whom they were unable to defend.

We stick at the technical difficulties. I think there never was a people so choked and stultified by forms. We adore the forms of law, instead of making them vehicles of wisdom and justice. I like the primary assembly. I own I have little esteem for governments. I esteem them only good in the moment when they are established. I set the private man first. He only who is able to stand alone is qualified to be a citizen. Next to the private man, I value the primary assembly, met to watch the government and to correct it. That is the theory of the American State, that it exists to execute the will of the citizens, is always responsible to them, and is always to be changed when it does not. First, the private citizen, then the primary assembly, and the government last.

In this country for the last few years the government has been the chief obstruction to the common weal. Who doubts that Kansas would have been very well settled, if the United States had let it alone? The government armed and led the ruffians against the poor farmers. I do not know any story so gloomy as the politics of this country for the last twenty years, centralizing ever more manifestly round one spring, and that a vast crime, and ever more plainly, until it is notorious that all promotion, power and policy are dictated from one source,—illustrating the fatal effects of a false position to demoralize legislation and put the best people always at a disadvantage—one crime always present, always to be varnished over, to find fine names for; and we free statesmen, as accomplices to the guilt, ever in the power of a grand offender.

Language has lost its meaning in the universal cant. *Representative Government* is really misrepresentative; *Union* is a conspiracy against the Northern States which the Northern States are to have the privilege of paying for; the *adding of Cuba and Central America* to the slave marts is *enlarging the area of Freedom*. *Manifest Destiny*, *Democracy*, *Freedom*, fine names for an ugly thing. They call it otto of rose and lavender—I call it bilge-water. They call it Chivalry and Freedom; I call it the stealing all the earnings of a poor man and the earnings of his little girl and boy, and the earnings of all that shall come from him, his children's children forever.

But this is Union, and this is Democracy; and our poor people, led by the nose by these fine words, dance and sing, ring bells and fire

cannon, with every new link of the chain which is forged for their limbs by the plotters in the Capitol.

What are the results of law and union? There is no Union. Can any citizen of Massachusetts travel in honor through Kentucky and Alabama and speak his mind? Or can any citizen of the Southern country who happens to think kidnapping a bad thing, say so? Let Mr. Underwood of Virginia answer. Is it to be supposed that there are no men in Carolina who dissent from the popular sentiment now reigning there? It must happen, in the variety of human opinions, that there are dissenters. They are silent as the grave. Are there no women in that country—women, who always carry the conscience of a people? Yet we have not heard one discordant whisper.

In the free states, we give a snivelling support to slavery. The judges give cowardly interpretations to the law, in direct opposition to the known foundation of all law, that *every immoral statute is void*. And here of Kansas, the President says: "Let the complainants go to the courts;" though he knows that when the poor plundered farmer comes to the court, he finds the ringleader who has robbed him dismounting from his own horse, and unbuckling his knife to sit as his judge.

The President told the Kansas Committee that the whole difficulty grew from "the factious spirit of the Kansas people respecting institutions which they need not have concerned themselves about." A very remarkable speech from a Democratic President to his fellow citizens, that they are not to concern themselves with institutions which they alone are to create and determine. The President is a lawyer, and should know the statutes of the land. But I borrow the language of an eminent man, used long since, with far less occasion: "If that be law, let the ploughshare be run under the foundations of the Capitol;"—and if that be Government, extirpation is the only cure.

I am glad to see that the terror at disunion and anarchy is disappearing. Massachusetts, in its heroic day, had no government—was an anarchy. Every man stood on his own feet, was his own governor; and there was no breach of peace from Cape Cod to Mount Hoosac. California, a few years ago, by the testimony of all people at that time in the country, had the best government that ever existed. Pans of gold lay drying outside of every man's tent, in perfect security. The land was measured into little strips of a few feet wide, all side by side. A bit of ground that your hand could cover was worth one



or two hundred dollars, on the edge of your strip; and there was no dispute. Every man throughout the country was armed with knife and revolver, and it was known that instant justice would be administered to each offence, and perfect peace reigned. For the Saxon man, when he is well awake, is not a pirate but a citizen, all made of hooks and eyes, and links himself naturally to his brothers, as bees hook themselves to one another and to their queen in a loyal swarm.

But the hour is coming when the strongest will not be strong enough. A harder task will the revolution of the nineteenth century be than was the revolution of the eighteenth century. I think the American Revolution bought its glory cheap. If the problem was new, it was simple. If there were few people, they were united, and the enemy three thousand miles off. But now, vast property, gigantic interests, family connections, webs of party, cover the land with a network that immensely multiplies the dangers of war.

Fellow citizens, in these times full of the fate of the Republic, I think the towns should hold town meetings, and resolve themselves into Committees of Safety, go into permanent sessions, adjourning from week to week, from month to month. I wish we could send the sergeant-at-arms to stop every American who is about to leave the country. Send home every one who is abroad, lest they should find no country to return to. Come home and stay at home, while there is a country to save. When it is lost it will be time enough then for any who are luckless enough to remain alive to gather up their clothes and depart to some land where freedom exists.

### *Massacre of the Marais Des Cygnes*

by JUDGE L. D. BAILEY

[For a biographical note on the author see "John Brown and the Kansas Conflict."]

FOR TEN YEARS Kansas was a battlefield. From the first year of its settlement late in 1854 to the close of the war in 1865, peace was but an empty name as the settlers never knew at what hour they might be attacked. Along the Missouri border the danger was greatest and the deeds of blood perpetrated there were of fearful atrocity. There was truly an "irrepressible conflict," and the antagonism was three-fold, moral, political and physical. One class hated slavery because

it was wrong. These were abolitionists and waged a moral warfare by voice, pen and press.

A second and larger class wanted a free state, because it would settle up faster, be more prosperous and give better scope for them personally to acquire property and position. Many of these were in favor of a free white state, excluding all negroes, whether slaves or free blacks. The press and the ballot box were the reliance of these men. It was a political matter.

A third class, excluding, however, some of the other two, had but little faith in any settlement of the question without a resort to arms. Old John Brown was perhaps the most conspicuous of these, and his aim was to abolish all slavery—not merely to keep it out of Kansas. . . . But the proslavery party had but one object, to establish slavery in the territory, and then bring it into the union as a slave state with two senators to help control the government of the nation. When it became pretty certain they would fail in this purpose, the more desperate of them were filled with a bitter hatred against all who opposed them.

A bitter contest had been waged in Linn and Bourbon counties and continued there after it had measurably died down in the vicinity of Lawrence and Leavenworth. John Brown and James Montgomery were the recognized leaders of the free state men in that quarter, and some violent pro-slavery men, who claimed to be actual settlers, were driven over the line into Missouri.

On the 10th of May, 1858, a party of twenty-five men, among whom were probably some who had been driven out, crossed back again into Kansas seemingly for no other purpose than revenge. They first called at a store at a place called "Trading Post" and took prisoners John F. Campbell, William Stilwell and George W. Andrews. They then scoured the country around for several miles and gathered up all the free state men they could find, except one or two who were armed and ready to defend themselves, placed them all in a wagon belonging to Stilwell, and started off towards Missouri with them. About three miles from Trading Post they halted, took the prisoners out of the wagon, formed them in a line in a ravine on Dry Creek, formed themselves in a line a few yards in front of the prisoners, then at a word from their leader they fired and every free state man fell. Five were killed instantly, one was but slightly wounded and was finished by putting a bullet through his head, and five others badly wounded either seemed or pretended to

be dead and all were left lying in their gore while the assassins rode off to their homes near West Point, Missouri. The murdered and wounded men were found by their friends and taken to their homes for nursing or burial. I think all of the wounded men ultimately recovered. Their names were William Hairgrove, Asa Hairgrove, and his son, Chas. Reed, a Congregational minister, Amos Hall and Chas. Snyder, a blacksmith. Asa Hairgrove was afterward nominated and elected state auditor, and I became well acquainted with him, and I have heard him relate the story very nearly as I have given it above. Chas. Snyder, the blacksmith I met and talked with at Osawatomie in May, 1859, on the occasion of the meeting at that place of the Republican convention held there to organize the Republican party as distinct from the "free state" party, which was made up of both Republicans and Democrats. Horace Greeley came on from New York to address that convention, and afterwards went on to California by way of Pike's Peak, where the new Clear Creek gold fields were just discovered. He wrote a full account of his observations in Kansas, and also of his trip overland, and it is then I believe that he enjoyed the famous ride with the Jehn stage driver, Hank Monk, of whom everybody has read.

Blacksmith Snyder was at Osawatomie and had charge of the cannon that fired the salutes in honor of Greeley and the great occasions and I chanced to get into conversation with him. He told his own experience and also that of another man who happened to be in his (Snyder's) shop that day—when Snyder was taken prisoner at his house. The man at the shop saw the ruffians coming toward the shop which was built of logs, with plenty of cracks between. He seized Snyder's rifle which stood in the corner and was well loaded, thrust its muzzle out between the logs and called on them to halt, which they did promptly. After a little parley they concluded that the man in the log shop was not worth what it would probably cost to get him and went their way leaving him in peace and safety. That proves that they were much more ready to kill than be killed. These twenty-five murderous ruffians never returned to Kansas or suffered punishment from any human law, except one, who, during the war, was taken prisoner somewhere on the border and was recognized by a soldier as one of the gang. A messenger was sent to Linn county for some of the men wounded on that occasion to come up to Kansas City to identify the man and Wm. Hairgrove went up. As soon as the prisoner saw the old man whom he doubtless supposed to have been



killed along with the rest, he started as if he had seen a ghost and exclaimed at once that they might take him right out and shoot him. They explained to him that he was to be taken back to Linn county and should have a fair trial before the court, but he declared there was no use in going to so much bother; that they had better take him out and shoot him and be done with it. He was overruled in that, however, and was taken to Linn county, indicted for murder and arraigned for trial before Judge Solon O. Thacher, from whom I had the narrative soon after it occurred. He pled [*sic*] guilty and refused to employ counsel, and when Judge Thacher refused to receive his plea of guilty, ordered a plea of "not guilty" be entered for him and assigned able counsel to defend him. He steadily persisted in declaring himself guilty and ready to suffer the penalty. The witnesses were produced and swore to the facts and the jury of course found him guilty.

The judge then asked the usual question—if he had anything to say before the sentence of death should be passed when, instead of pleading for mercy, he surprised the judge by asking to be taken right out and hung at once.

The judge told him kindly that he wished to give him time to prepare for death and would set the day of execution two months ahead. But he persisted in asking to be hung at once, saying repeatedly that "he hadn't any clean clothes and wanted it over with." He was perfectly cool—reiterated the talk about not "having any clean clothes"—was finally given a month for preparation, much against his wish and was duly hung on the day appointed, seemingly glad when the time came round so that he could get the ugly job off his mind and be done with it.

Three of the murder gang were brothers named Hamilton, and they were originally from Tennessee. It seems that one of them returned to Tennessee and owned a fine plantation there during the war. One night the Kansas Eighth, under Col. John A. Martin, now governor of Kansas, camped on that plantation, and by mere accident found out who owned it, whereupon the soldiers effected means to leave tokens of their visit by burning everything on or about the place that would burn, and otherwise signifying the sense of his crime. Probably no single crime of the whole ten years produced so great a sensation as this most devilish and cold blooded wholesale murder.

*From Border Ruffian Troubles in Kansas, 1899.*

## *Lizzie and the Underground Railroad*

by RICHARD CORDLEY

[Richard Cordley came to America at the age of four from Nottingham, England. The family settled in Michigan, where Richard attended the public schools and later worked his way through the University of Michigan. He then spent three years at Andover Theological Seminary, going to the Plymouth Congregational Church at Lawrence after his graduation in 1857. Except for three years in Michigan and six years in Emporia, he was pastor of the Lawrence church until his death. He was marked for death in the Quantrill raid but managed to escape the guerrillas.]

DURING THE SUMMER of 1859 we were living in a stone house just south of the city limits of Lawrence, before we had a home of our own. As the town then was, we were fully half a mile from any other house. There was in my church a family named Monteith. They were from McIndoe's Falls, Vermont, and the gentleman was a descendant of one of the Scotch families who early settled in northern New England. . . . Like most of the early settlers he came to make Kansas a free state, and he proposed to stay and see it done. We soon became fast friends and our families were quite intimate. He lived on a farm, or "claim," some two miles southwest of the town, in the Wakarusa bottom.

One day Monteith came to my house and said he wanted to talk over a little matter with me. "There is at my house a runaway slave, who has been here several months. She is a very likely young woman and has a great horror of being taken back to slavery. At the same time we do not like to send her to Canada until arrangements can be made for her. She would be entirely alone. So we have been keeping her here in Lawrence. She has been at my house for several weeks, and it is thought wisest to find another home for her. It is not best for her to be too long in one place. Would you take her into your house for a few weeks until other arrangements can be made?"

In my college days I had discussed the "Fugitive Slave Law" in Lyceum and elsewhere. I had denounced it as the outrage of outrages, as a natural outgrowth of the "sum of all villainies." I had burned with indignation when the law was passed in 1850. I had declared that if a poor wanderer ever came to my house, I should take him in and never ask whether he were a slave or not. It is easy

to be brave a thousand miles away. But now I must face the question at short range. I had been quite familiar with the law, and its penalties came to mind very vividly just then. "For harboring a slave, six months imprisonment and \$1,000 fine." All this passed through my mind in rapid succession. It was the first time I had ever confronted the question except in theory. Theory and practice affect one very differently in a case like this. But I felt there was only one thing to do. So we told our friend to bring his charge to our house, and we would care for her as best we could.

The next day, therefore, "Lizzie" became an inmate of our house. She was about twenty-two years old, slightly built, and graceful in form and motion. She was quite dark, but the form of her features indicated some white blood. She was very quiet and modest and never obtruded herself upon any one. She had been thoroughly trained as a house servant, and we never have had more competent help than Lizzie proved to be. She insisted on doing the larger portion of the housework, and said the work of our little family was like play to her. She was a good cook and often surprised us by some dainty dish of her own. Our means did not allow a very elaborate table, but she knew how to make the most of everything. A simple but delicious cake which she made was known in our family and among our friends for years as "Lizzie cake." We did not wonder that her master set a high price on her, or that he was anxious to recover his "property." She did not complain of cruel treatment from her owners, but she had a great horror of going back. She would live anywhere or anyhow, and would work at anything, rather than go back to slavery. She fully understood the situation and the danger of being taken back if her whereabouts became known. She kept herself out of sight as much as possible, and never showed herself out-of-doors or in the front part of the house when there was travel going by on the road. We became deeply interested in her and learned more and more to prize her. Our housework was never done more quietly or more efficiently. We came to look forward with dismay to the time when Lizzie must leave us.

In the autumn of the same year, 1859, the Monteiths moved into town, and it was thought best for Lizzie to return to them. We were reluctant to let her go, but we had no claim. Besides, she had been with us as long as it was wise for her to stay. We were in a lonely place, and it would not be difficult to kidnap her and take her off. By this time her being with us was very generally known. She



went home with the Monteiths, therefore, and remained with them until a change was made necessary by "circumstances over which they had no control."

About this time a young man called upon me and reported himself as a graduate of the last class in Andover Theological Seminary. He had come to Kansas in search of a field of labor. He was not particular as to the kind of a field. He only wanted a place where he could preach Christ and do good. His name was William Hayes Ward. His father was a Massachusetts pastor distinguished for his familiarity with the language of Scripture. It was said that in his father's house the Scriptures were read at morning worship in "seven different languages." They read in turn, and each member of the family read in a different tongue. However this may be, this son was one of the best scholars Andover ever sent out. For many years he has been the well-known editor of the New York *Independent*, and one of the best editors in the land. He had devoted himself to the foreign field, but his wife's health was so delicate that it was not deemed wise for them to go abroad. So he had come to find a home missionary field in Kansas. After some investigation and consultation he had selected Oskaloosa as his field. There was no church yet formed at that place, but a number of people were anxious to have one, and he had consented to help them in the enterprise. He remained there as long as the failing health of his wife would permit. He was a man of infinite energy. On one occasion, needing some delicacies for his sick wife, he walked to Lawrence, twenty-four miles, to procure them. He took dinner with us, and then announced his intention of returning home the same afternoon. About three o'clock he started back and reached home about midnight, having walked forty-eight miles since morning.

It was late in the autumn when he went to his field, and he and Mrs. Ward were making a final visit at our house before leaving town. We were enjoying very much a day or two with them. One very cold afternoon during this time, there came a sharp rap at the door. I opened it and two gentlemen stood there, wrapped in heavy fur overcoats. They were so bundled up that I did not recognize them, but I bade them enter. When they had come in and thrown back their wraps a little, we saw that one was our old friend Monteith and the other was Lizzie. We knew their coming in this way was not a joke, so we waited in silence for an explanation. Monteith then told us: "Lizzie's master has found out where she is.

He is determined to take her back at any cost. He proposes to make a test case of it and show that a slave can be taken out of Lawrence, and returned to slavery. A large sum of money is offered for her recovery, and the United States marshal is here with his posse to take her at all hazards. They found where Lizzie was this morning and have been shadowing my house all day. Not a movement could be made about our house without their knowledge. Lizzie could not get away without being seen. Their plan seems to be to watch the house all day and be sure she does not leave it, and then at night come and take her, and rush her away, before any alarm can be given. We determined to foil them. So Lizzie put on that overcoat of mine and drew the cap down over her head, and we walked out together as two gentlemen. We went to town, and then we turned south and came down here. When I go back they will think my companion stayed over in town. Now, we want Lizzie to stay here till night. About ten o'clock a team will come for her and take her into the country to a place of safety."

After answering a few questions, Montieth left us. We looked at each other in silence for a moment, and then came the thought, "What shall we do?" I had little hope that her new hiding-place would not be known. The United States marshal was a man of experience and of determined purpose. He knew what he had come for, and every motive prompted him to persevere. He had assistants with him who understood their business. It was not likely that they would be deceived by the ruse we were attempting to practice. As night came on we were confronted by the probability that Lizzie's pursuers would come before her rescuers arrived. If they did, then what should we do? What could we do? To give her up to them was not to be thought of, but how to prevent their taking her was a serious question. It would be folly to resist by force. There were no arms in the house, and if there had been we should not have used them. These were officers of the law and resistance would be madness. Could we in any way save Lizzie from them if they should come? Of course, they would search the house. The ladies, Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Cordley, hit upon a plan to which we all assented. As has been said, Mrs. Ward was an invalid, very slight of figure and pale of feature. She was to retire immediately after tea. Her room was the front chamber. The bed consisted of a mattress with a light feather bed spread over it. Mrs. Ward was to play the sick lady. She was so pale and slight that this was not a difficult part for her.

Mrs. Cordley was to play the part of nurse, and was to be sitting by the bed. A stand at the bedside with bottles and spoons and glasses completed the picture of the sick-room. In case of alarm Lizzie was to crawl in between the mattress and the feather bed and remain quiet there till the danger was passed. Lizzie assented to the plan with great readiness. "I will make myself just as small as ever I can, and I will lie as still as still can be." Then she turned to Mrs. Ward and said: "You need not be afraid of lying right on me with all your might. You are such a little body you could not hurt any one." If the officers came they were to be told to look for themselves. The house would be thrown open to them. The illusion of the sick-room was so complete and natural that we felt a perfect assurance that they would not disturb a lady as sick as Mrs. Ward would be by that time.

The women remained up-stairs during the evening. Mrs. Ward retired according to program, and the bed was made ready for the "second act." Lizzie kept herself in the shade, so that her form might not be observed through the windows. Ward and I sat in the parlor, talking of everything on earth and elsewhere, but thinking of just one thing, and listening for the sound of wheels. The night was dark and cloudy and biting cold. We never realized how long the evenings were at this season of the year. The question which puzzled us was: "Which will come first, friend or foe?" Every noise we heard we fancied was one or the other. About ten o'clock, the time set for the rescue, we heard a carriage coming up the road. It might be simply going by. As it came to the gate it turned in and drove up to the door and stopped. We waited in silence, expecting a knock at the door. We wondered which it was and how many there were. There was dead silence. No one seemed to be coming to the house. What were they doing? What were they going to do? Who were they? After a few moments of absolute silence, the carriage moved on, drove by the house, and turned around. It then passed out of the gate and down the road the way it came. It was a greater mystery than ever. What did they come for and why did they go away? After a while we came to the conclusion that it must have been a part of the marshal's posse and that they had come to take Lizzie. Seeing the house lighted up-stairs and down, they supposed we were prepared for them and did not dare come in. We felt sure they would come again soon with a larger force. Where were Monteith and his friends all this while? It was now nearly eleven o'clock and they were to



come at ten. Had the officers intercepted them? We could only wait and see. The moments dragged very slowly, as they always do when you want them to hurry. Eleven o'clock passed and then twelve, and still no relief and no sound. About half past twelve we again heard the sound of wheels coming up the road. It was not likely that any travelers would be going by at this time of night. Again the question came, which will it be, friend or foe? It was a wagon this time. This was favorable. The rescuers expected to come with a large immigrant wagon. Still, the pursuers might do the same. The wagon turned in at the gate as the carriage had done before. It came to the door and stopped. There was a moment of silence and painful suspense. Then there was a soft tap at the door. I opened it and a whisper came out of the darkness: "All ready." It was Monteith. The word was passed up-stairs, and in a very few minutes Lizzie came down warmly wrapped up for the cold night's journey. It was very dark and we could scarcely see the team and could not at all distinguish the faces of our friends. Monteith's voice was sufficient to assure us of their genuineness. We could see that they had a large covered wagon and that the ride would be made as comfortable as possible. Lizzie was only too glad to escape the terrible doom which had threatened her. There were no parting ceremonies and no long farewells. The wagon was in motion almost before we realized that it had come. All the while we were listening for the sound of wheels or hoofs. A few minutes' delay might defeat the whole plan. I presume it was not more than ten minutes from the time they stopped till they were all on their way and moving off into the night. We stood at the door and listened until the sound of wheels died away in the distance, and then we went in with a wonderful sense of relief after the strain and excitement of the day and the night. . . .

We never knew where Lizzie's rescuers went, and did not inquire. It is often just as well not to know too much. We did not know where they took her that night, only that she was safe. We were told afterwards that the wagon was followed by a number of armed horsemen for several miles; but they made no attack. They were wise enough to practice the "better part of valor." The wagon and its company were not molested and reached their destination in safety.

We learned still later that Lizzie, after being cared for in Kansas for a few months, was taken to Canada, where she found friends and a comfortable home. Beyond this we never heard. The war

soon after broke out and other stirring events occupied our attention.

This was the first and only time I ever came in personal contact with the Underground Railroad. It is the only time I ever had any personal knowledge of its operation. I have sometimes wondered how it was I did not oftener know something of movements of this kind, but I presume those engaged in them never cared to have any more persons in the secret than was necessary. So far as I know very few Kansas people ever enticed slaves away or incited them to escape. But when one did escape and came to their door, there were not many who would refuse him a meal or a helping hand. A slave escaping across the line was sure to find friends, and was sure not to be betrayed into the hands of his pursuers. It was said that the line of the Underground Railroad ran directly through Lawrence and Topeka, then on through Nebraska and Iowa. This roundabout way was the shortest cut to the north pole. Every slave for a hundred miles knew the way, knew the stations and knew their friends. I have been told by those who ought to know, that not less than one hundred thousand dollars' worth of slaves passed through Lawrence on their way to liberty during the territorial period. Most of this travel passed over the line so quietly that very few people knew anything about it.

From *Pioneer Days in Kansas*, New York: Pilgrims Press, 1903.

## *The Story of My Escape*

by THE REV. H. D. FISHER

[The Reverend H. D. Fisher, a native of Ohio, had pulpits in various places in Ohio and Pennsylvania before coming to Kansas in 1858. He first preached at Leavenworth; then, after three years there, in Lawrence. He was appointed chaplain of the Fifth Kansas cavalry, served in Arkansas and Missouri, and happened to have come home, sick with quinsy, a few days before the Quantrill massacre, August 21, 1863.]

THE MOST MIRACULOUS incident in my eventful life is my escape from death at the hands of the guerrillas at the time of the Quantrell raid. There were many narrow escapes experienced by our citizens on that awful morning, but none of which I have knowledge is more strikingly illustrative of the dangers and terrors of the situation,

nor of the fortitude and courage and resourcefulness under the most trying ordeals of a heroine having faith in herself, faith in her God and devotion to her husband and family. Could I but remove self from the recital of this occurrence I would freely proclaim that of all the individual incidents of the war none is more deserving of record, none more pregnant with heroism, none more truly illustrative of the bravery of the gentler sex when called upon to face the most exacting trials of life.

I had been ill and was wakeful through the night. About four o'clock in the morning I was awakened by the sound of horses' hoofs directly in front of my dwelling on the Northwest corner of the public park in the Southern part of the town. Arising hastily I partly dressed and went to the door opening to the east on our upper piazza and saw three horsemen riding rapidly out of town to the South. I felt that some calamity was impending and said to my wife that I was afraid something terrible was going to happen. She replied that I was ill and nervous, that there had been a railroad meeting the night before and that some of the countrymen who had been in attendance were doubtless going out early to their work on their farms. Thus assured I felt easier and lay down again, though troubled in mind and still fearful that the presence of those horsemen and their rapid ride to the Southward boded no good. It was so near getting-up time that I did not fully undress, but lay on the side of the bed with trousers on.

A half hour later my wife decided to get up, remarking that she had planned to take the older boys and go wild grape gathering that day, and that she believed she would get breakfast and start early that a full day might be put in the woods. She arose, commenced dressing and called the children that it was time to get up. Dawn was just streaking the eastern horizon, and she went to the front windows to raise the curtain to let in the light. As she looked out Southeastwardly she was attracted by a body of troops entering the outskirts of the town. She looked attentively for a minute and turning quickly exclaimed:

"Pa, get up! There is a company of soldiers coming into town. I believe it is Quantrell and his men!"

I bounded to the door just in time to see them shoot down Rev. Mr. Snyder as he sat milking his cow in front of his house, and was confirmed in my wife's fears that Quantrell was upon us. As I watched the raiders for a minute they began to break into squads



and fly to different parts of the town, shooting right and left as a man would appear in sight, and calling men to their front doors in their night dresses to kill them at sight.

I did not stop to dress further, except to throw on a shirt and put on my shoes, and thus arrayed I ran down stairs, out of the house to the stable and turned loose on the common back of our lot a blooded horse and a pony we had in the barn, thinking them less likely to be stolen if loose upon the prairie than if tied in the stable.

By this time my boys, William and Edmund, aged respectively twelve and ten years, were dressed, as was also our son Joseph, aged seven. My wife had Frank, six months old, in her arms and Josie by her side, and begged earnestly that with the older boys I should take to Mount Oread lying a quarter of a mile to the West and try to get to the bushes beyond it. So we started up the prairie to the foot of the hills, running together, Mrs. Fisher remaining behind with the younger children.

As I ran I felt all the time I was going away from the only place of safety. I was weak from my illness and knew that I could not run far nor fast. Furthermore, upon glancing up the hill I could see pickets stationed every hundred yards or so, so that it would be impossible for me to get through their line alive. The boys were smaller and could dart through the hazel and sumach bushes skirting the hill, and they ran on while I decided to go back to the house.

Willie fell in with a school fellow named Robbie Martin, an older and larger boy, and they ran together. Robbie's mother had made him a suit of clothing out of his father's old soldier clothes, and as the boys ran together near one of the pickets he was attracted by the uniform and gave them chase, killing young Martin right by my boy's side, his brains and blood spattering in Willie's face, frightening him almost to death and so terrorizing that he has never fully recovered his nervous vigor.

Edmund got separated from his brother in their flight and caught up with Freddie Leonard, a boy a year or more older than he, the two running together. They succeeded in evading the pickets, though shot at from a distance a number of times, and sought refuge in the town cemetery two and a half miles out. After their first terror had somewhat subsided they became frightened at being in a graveyard and sought a place of hiding in a patch of cotton being grown by an enterprising German farmer a little way from the cemetery. From this they could see the smoke from the burning town

and hear the firing, and so terrorized were they that it was well on toward the middle of the afternoon before they dared venture to get a sip of water or to return toward the town.

After leaving my boys as they ran I made my way back into my yard through a rear gate and down the garden walk into the kitchen and on into the cellar. Our house was a two-story brick, with a one-story stone kitchen built on later. The entrance to the cellar was through the kitchen, consequently I was able to enter it without going through the main part of the house. My wife heard me, however, and asked if it was I who had gone down stairs. I replied in the affirmative, whereupon she expressed her fear that I had done wrong, telling me that the guerrillas were killing everybody they could find to shoot at and that she was afraid they would find and kill me too. I told her of the pickets on the hill and of how weak I found I was as I tried to run, and that under the circumstances there was nothing to do but to come back and take my chances.

"Well, trust in the Lord and pray that he may save you. I will pray also, and do all I can for you," she replied, as she left the cellar way and went to the front part of the house to look after Josie and the baby.

She had hardly got to the front part of the house when four of the murderous villains rode up to the front gate, dismounted and demanded admittance. I was lying just beneath the front hall, parallel with it and near the front door, and could hear every word they said.

Accosting my wife with oaths they inquired, "Is your husband about the house?"

"Do you think," she replied, "that he would be fool enough to stay about the house and you killing everybody you can? No, sir; he left with the little boys when you first came into town."

With an oath one of them contradicted her, and to her astonishment and mine replied, "I know a d—d sight better; he's in the cellar; where is it?"

"It is not very gentlemanly for you to doubt the word of a lady," she said, "and besides, I don't want you to swear in the presence of my children. The cellar is open, if you think he is there go look for yourselves."

The men walked right over where I was lying, through the dining room into the kitchen and to the cellar doorway. There was no other entrance for light and it looked very dark down the steps, so

one of them turned to her and remarked, "It is too dark for us to go down there without a light; get us a candle."

"We don't burn candles," she replied.

"What do you burn for a light if you don't burn candles?"

"We burn oil—in a lamp," was her answer.

They demanded a lamp and my wife, believing the only way to save me was to throw them off the track, freely gave it to them. As the man after taking it from her attempted to light it he turned the wick down into the bowl and turned to her to ask her assistance. She looked at it and told him he had ruined it, that it would take half an hour at least to get it so it would burn.

This diverted them for the time and they set about ransacking the house, appropriating unto themselves everything they could find of value and many articles that were new to them but which possessed no value. Finally one of them said to her, "Haven't you another lamp in this house?"

"Yes," she replied, "But it is up stairs."

She was ordered to go and get it, but protested that she could not carry the baby and suggested that one of them must go and get the lamp or hold the baby while she went for it.

One of their number took Frank from her arms and walked the floor with him, cooing to him to keep him quiet while his mother went for the lamp, perhaps wondering the while whether the father whose life he was seeking had eyes like the baby's eyes and what would become of the child if they took his life.

I heard my wife come down the front stairs and knew that in her hand she held the lighted lamp with which they were to search for me, and was almost persuaded to save them the trouble by emerging from the cellar and surrendering myself into their hands. Just then, however, I heard the man to whom she handed the lamp say:

"Come on, now, cock your revolvers and kill at sight."

This determined my action and I gave up the thought of surrendering, knowing that it meant certain death. As I reached this conclusion they began to descend the stairway into the cellar and my life hung as by a thread.

The body of our house was twenty by thirty feet in dimension. The cellar was but eight by fourteen feet, occupying the middle part of the space beneath the house. It had been dug just deep enough and large enough to accommodate our immediate necessities, it hav-



ing been our intention to complete it later. The dirt which had been excavated had been thrown upon the bank between the limits of the cellar and the foundation walls of the house, more on one side than the other. When I entered I crawled upon the bank on that side of the excavation and lay behind the bank of dirt thus carelessly thrown up. I lay flat upon my back, and as my face was deeper than wide I turned my head on the flat, also, and lay as close to the earth as I possibly could. My left foot shook so that I was compelled to place my right foot upon it to keep it still.

Just as I got as snugly in position as was possible the scoundrels entered. There were three of them, one having remained behind to guard the house against approach. The ceiling was low, and as the man who held the lamp in one hand, a cocked revolver in the other, stepped to the floor he was compelled to stoop to keep from striking his head against the joists. In stooping he brought the lighted lamp directly under his face, and the heat and glare caused him to hold it to one side, the side on which I was lying within a few feet of him. This threw the shadow of the bank of dirt over me and they did not see me. My wife had so completely thrown them off of their guard that their search was not thorough, else I would not be here to tell the story. I could see them plainly, could even have reached over and touched the leader on the shoulder. But they did not see me and I was saved. "The shadow of the Almighty was over me," and under his wings He protected me. My heart stood still. I did not breathe. Every act of my life came before me like a panorama. I lived but did not live. I died but did not die. In God's goodness and mercy the hour of my departure had not yet come. I was naked and helpless before my own conscience and could see eternity as plainly as noonday. "This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and delivered him from all his enemies." Blessed be the name of the Lord, he saved me when salvation seemed impossible, when death was at hand, when deliverance had ceased to be hoped for!

During this fearful ordeal the agony of my wife's soul can readily be imagined. As the guerrillas took the lamp from her and went to the cellar doorway she passed quickly to the front part of the house, pressed the baby to one ear and her hand to the other to deaden the noise of the fatal shots she now expected to hear and to drown my death groans. Her agony was intense. Her soul was tried to the uttermost. Her heart-strings were almost rended asunder; and espe-

cially since she had almost become convinced that her courageous assurance had not misled the villains and that in part upon her pure hands might rest my blood. If it was an awful moment for me, what must it not have been for her? As I calmly consider what she must have passed through during the minutes those murderous men were seeking my life I am filled with admiration for her courage, her fortitude, her confidence in God. It is one of the grandest exhibitions of womanly devotion and hope of which there is record. Had she swerved in the least degree, had she allowed her emotions to overcome her, had she allowed her fears to be seen, all would have been lost. God never blessed man with a nobler wife than mine, nor one possessed of greater courage and resourcefulness in time of trouble. To God and His servant, my wife, I owe my life, my all.

Finding themselves baffled in their pursuit of the hated pioneer preacher whose life they had so often sought, one of the men said to the others with an oath, "The woman told the truth. The rascal has escaped," and they turned and left the cellar.

When they were gone I found that the suspense had been most awful and that it had left me as one dead. It was a physical effort to return to life, and it was a moment before I fully realized that whether in or out of the body the Lord had marvellously saved me thus far.

When those cold-hearted villains went up into the dining room my wife's confidence and courage returned and she took the lamp from one of them, extinguished the flame, and said to him:

"You will believe me, now, I hope. I told you my husband had gone an hour ago. You needn't suppose that any one is going to be fool enough to remain around and be shot down if he can get away."

He uttered a muttered oath, continued the search for valuables and ordered the house fired, as it was one that was doomed to go. After the fire had been started up stairs they left one of their number to stand guard, the others riding off to further deviltry.

"Madam," said the one who remained, "if there is anything you wish to save I'll help you save it."

"Turn in and help me put out the fire," she replied, as she struggled to stamp and smother it out in various places.

"It would cost me my life to do that," he replied, "but I can help you save your stuff if you want me to."

"If you can't help me put out the fire," she said, "just get on your

horse and ride off, telling them that it was burning when you left and I'll soon put it out myself."

"I will do so," he said, "but it will do you no good, for this is one of the marked houses and is bound to go."

He mounted his horse and rode off, cautioning my wife to save what she could as the house would surely be burned. She thinks he was the one to whom she handed the baby when she went for the lamp and that this confidence in him and the child's cooing had touched his heart.

My wife carried water up stairs and extinguished the flames, and having flooded the floors and beds thoroughly came again to the cellar door.

"Pa," said she, "those men who were hunting you set fire to the house in several places and left, but I have put the fire all out so you have no need of being afraid; I must go now and attend to Frank for he is crying for me. But I am afraid another party may come and find you yet and kill you, and I want to know, if they should, are you ready to die? That knowledge would be better to us than all besides."

I told her how I felt, and she said, "Continue to pray and trust in the Lord, and I'll do all I can to save you; I must go now."

She left me and it seemed like a long time until she returned. Lying on the ground, as I was, I could hear the horses' feet and the roar of the burning town, the noise of the falling horses, the shouts of the human demons and the screams of the dying. It seemed indeed as if pandemonium reigned and that a whirlwind of destruction was sweeping over the city. Imagine, if possible, my relief when I heard the voice of my wife as she came near, talking loudly to the children that I might know it was she.

They had scarcely reached the parlor when three other of the murderers came rushing into the hall inquiring, "Madam, are you a widow?"

"Not unless you men have found my husband outside and have killed him," she said. "He left the house with our little boys when you first came to town. There has been a party of your men here already and they hunted all through the house and in the cellar for him, but, thank God, they did not find him."

"I am d—d glad of it," replied the impulsive leader.

They did not visit the cellar, my wife had so completely thrown



them off the track. But when they saw the house had been fired by their comrades and that the fire had been extinguished, and having drunk whisky freely before coming, they were very angry and swore that the house must be burned, "as it is one that was marked to be destroyed."

This second band broke the window shutters and chairs and book-case into fuel, made kindling wood of the furniture, and fired the house more effectually than before. Then two of the number left. The other one, now drunk and murderous, remained with revolver in hand and swore he would kill my wife if she attempted to go up stairs and put out the fire. She slammed the door in his face and began drawing water out of the well, filling buckets, tubs and pans. When the fire had driven this fiend out of the hall and into the street she saw that fire from the main building had ignited the kitchen roof, and realizing that through the kitchen was my only way of escape she climbed upon the cook stove and dashed water on the under side of the board roof, then drew a table near outside, set a stand upon that, and putting pans and buckets of water on the roof climbed up and threw water upon it, thus saving the kitchen.

But she saw another danger. The roof of the main building projected over the kitchen, and the burning cornice was about to fall. So she got down, filled her buckets and pans anew and again climbed to the roof and after dashing a pan of water over her dress to keep the fire from lighting her clothes stood with the roaring fire in front of her until the flaming cornice fell at her feet. Then she dashed water on it where it was nailed together at the crest, and stamping it apart tumbled it off the kitchen and threw the rest of the water on the roof.

Then came still a new danger. The small windows in the rear wall of the main building were on fire and might fall outward on the kitchen and yet set it on fire. So she called to Joseph, our seven year old boy, to give her a stick of cord wood and with this she punched the windows into the burning building. She had saved her kitchen, and through it had saved me!

The main building was built of brick, which had been saturated by the boys dipping them in tubs of water as the masons laid them in the walls, so the cementing together was perfect. Hence the walls stood when all the lumber was burned out. I was lying on the bank of earth just under the door that led to the kitchen, when the whole upper story of the house fell to the floor immediately over me.

My wife then began pouring water through the kitchen door on the floor beyond, but the heat and flames became so intense that she had to draw the door shut to prevent them from setting fire to the kitchen. The lower floor burned through, fell into the cellar and burned to within a yard or so of where I was lying. I expected to be cremated alive, when suddenly I saw a little stream of water trickling through a knot-hole in the floor. I then realized what an unconquerable fight my wife was making for my life. Soon a Mrs. Shugro, a neighbor, came to where she was working close to where I lay and said to her, "Mrs. Fisher, what are you trying to save that piece of floor for? It won't be worth anything."

"I don't care, I am going to save it if I can for a memento. Bring me more water." Then addressing the woman in a lower tone she said to her, "Mrs. Shugro, I have a secret to tell you. By the Virgin Mary and all the Saints"—she was a Catholic—"will you keep it?"

"I will."

"Mr. Fisher is under that floor."

The woman raised her hands and was about to scream when my wife said to her, "Don't speak a word, for they are all around here watching for him."

"What are you going to do to save him?"

"I'll have him come up the cellar-way and crawl under that piece of carpet, and we will hide him in the garden under yonder little bush, covering it with the carpet."

Then she came down into the cellar and said to me, "You must come out of there or burn alive; I can't keep the fire back any longer. I am afraid they will find you outside and kill you, after all; but stand here till I look outside and when you come up to the level of the floor crouch down as low as possible, crawl under the carpet and follow me out into the garden to the little bush overgrown with morning-glory vines, lay flat on the ground under the bush, and I'll throw the carpet over it and you."

She looked out and finding the coast clear told me to follow her. As I came up the stairs she dropped a dress over my head and shoulders. I gathered it about my body, crouched close to the floor, crawled along as close to her and the ground as I could, part of the time trampling on the carpet she was dragging from her shoulders, and followed her to the bush. Here I lay flat upon the ground and wormed myself under the little bush while my wife and Mrs. Shugro threw the carpet over it. When this was done and the women turned

away there were four guerrillas by the fence, not eighty feet away, with guns in their hands, standing looking at the women.

"Mrs. Shugro," called my wife, loudly, "Let's throw those chairs and things on top of this carpet. What's the use of saving anything from that old burning house and then have them burn up outside?"

We have three of those chairs yet as heirlooms.

They piled the chairs and everything of the kind on the carpet, while the bush kept them from exposing me. I was almost famished for a drink, and at one time as my wife came near I whispered to her that I wanted a drink of water.

Josie, who was close by, heard me and said to his mother, "Pa is here somewhere; I heard him speak."

His mother replied, "Why Josie, your papa went away with the boys when the men first came to town. You go up to the stable and bring me the rake."

When the little fellow had gone she came close, tucked the carpet around the bush and warned me not to speak again for my life. I obeyed and laid there until after eleven o'clock, when the band of murderers had all left town.

When I came out of hiding I was all but dead. I had gone into the cellar before five o'clock and had been under intense mental strain and had been four times in imminent danger of death in those six hours of most terrible and indescribable experience, all of which my wife had passed in agony and heroic effort to save her husband. When I came out from under the carpet and bush our house and all we owned in it were in ashes.

Willie came back after a little while and told of Robby Martin and his terrible death, of others who were killed in the prairie, of how he ran past the picket after they had killed his little comrade and joined Mrs. Solomon and her children for safety, and how, bye and bye, another party of guerrillas had come to them and asked who they were, threatening to kill the boys. When asked whose boy he was he said he was Mrs. Solomon's boy; and he told us how his heart was almost broken at the thought of having denied being my son; but he knew they hated me because I was a chaplain in the army.

Upon recovering our self-control we went down town to find that more than one hundred and eighty of our citizens had been killed and many of them burned until they could not be recognized.



The whole business part of our town was in ashes. Eighty widows and two hundred and fifty children were in indescribable grief!

Crushed and grief stricken we returned to our own desolation, and remained about the ashes of our home until four o'clock. Edmund had not returned, and my wife had become almost frantic by this time, fearing he had been killed and was lying on the prairie uncared for, or perhaps wounded and bleeding to death. She left her babe with a neighbor, and taking an old sheet and table cloth saved from the fire ran in search of him, calling to everybody she could see asking for her boy. After traversing nearly a mile she saw him and Freddie Leonard coming toward her, and he, seeing his mother, rushed to her. She joyfully threw away the sheet and table cloth which she had carried to bind up his wounds, and ran to meet her new found boy. As they came near each other, he called out to her in fright and anguish,

"O, Ma, is Pa or Willie killed?"

"No, thank God," his mother answered, "we are all alive."

As they came down the garden walk I took the babe in my arms and William and Josie by my side and we met mother and Edmund in the garden under the shadow of a little peach tree, and there I put my arm around my wife and we all knelt on the ground and sent up to our Father in Heaven a volume of thanksgiving and praise. None but those who have passed through like dangers and have experienced like deliverance, can conceive the gratitude to God that springs up within the heart. We realized that the Angel of the Lord encampeth around about them that fear him and keep his commandments and delivereth them.

The question has often been asked of my wife, "Mrs. Fisher, how could you keep your courage and confidence and plan and do so much to save your husband?" And always her reply has been, "The Lord helped me. Has he not said, 'Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee and thou shalt glorify me?'"

From *The Gun and the Gospel*, Chicago: The Kenwood Press, 1896.

## *Price's Retreat and Escape*

by SAMUEL J. CRAWFORD

[Samuel J. Crawford emigrated from Indiana to Garnett, Kansas, in 1859, where he opened a law office. He was a member of the first legislature,

but resigned when President Lincoln issued his calls for volunteers. He took part in most of the battles west of the Mississippi and in 1865 was promoted to the rank of Brigadier-General by brevet. In 1864 he was elected governor, but resigned four years later to head the regiment which finally subdued the Indians who had been giving trouble for several years in western Kansas.]

THE BATTLE of Mine Creek was one of the most important of all the battles ever fought on the soil of Kansas. General Price with an army of about nine thousand ragged, hungry soldiers, after a wild, reckless raid through Missouri, was trying to make his escape through Kansas and back to the dismal swamps of the Sunny South. He had been fighting and running for thirty consecutive days and his deluded followers were crying for bread.

Price was on his last legs, and his men were on their uppers. At Fort Scott, twenty miles away, was a Federal depot of army supplies; and to reach and capture that post was the ambition of his military life. To keep him out of Fort Scott was the determination of the Federal troops, including Colonel Blair, Colonel Cloud, and myself. We three had previously fought Price, Marmaduke, Shelby, and Fagan at Wilson's Creek and on other bloody fields. We had been ordered from another department to assist in keeping these bold riders out of Kansas, and we could not afford to linger in the rear and let Fort Scott go down.

On the field at Westport we became satisfied that Shelby was short of ammunition. In charging Marmaduke's rear early that morning I knew his men were not prepared to fight, because the regiment making the charge did not lose a single man. Of course, the enemy had a limited supply, but not enough to hold a pursuing army in check; and I was thoroughly convinced of that fact when Marmaduke was forming his line of battle north of Mine Creek.

His rear-guard formed on top of the hill or elevation in his front, to hold the Federal troops back while he was forming his main line. But his rear-guard did not stand on the hill a minute before the guns of our advancing troops. They broke and fell back on Marmaduke's main force, which was then rapidly forming in two lines, parallel with the creek. When Marmaduke's rear-guard broke, we deployed two companies of cavalry as skirmishers and pushed them forward to within about four hundred yards of the enemy, and held the remainder of the advance in line as a reserve.

As our skirmish line advanced, Marmaduke opened fire with two pieces of artillery. I then sent Sergeant J. P. Hiner, of Company A, Second Kansas, back to tell General Blunt that the enemy had halted and formed in line of battle, and asked him to bring his division to the front as quickly as possible. When Sergeant Hiner started, I called in the skirmishers and ordered Major Hopkins and Captain Green to move their battalions over in front of Marmaduke's extreme left, so as to give Blunt an open field when he arrived.

I knew he was furiously mad about having been put in the rear at West Point the previous evening, when his men and horses were comparatively fresh, but I had no doubt about his coming to the front quickly when he heard that Price was in battle array on Kansas soil. After waiting a short time, which seemed to be longer than it was, Sergeant Hiner returned with the information that General Blunt was still roaring and declined in most vigorous terms to take any further part. For the exact language used by the General on that occasion, I must refer the reader to Mr. J. P. Hiner of Paola, Kansas, late Treasurer of Miami County; but it was terse and vigorous. Nothing like it is found in any of the chapters of the New Testament.

It was a sad disappointment of Colonel Blair and myself. For thirty minutes we had been picturing such a cavalry scene as is seldom witnessed on the field of battle. The formation of the ground—a broad, smooth, down-grade prairie—was perfect. Marmaduke had formed his lines on the farther side with a skirt of timber along the creek in his rear. Fagan's division was in line on the other side of the creek about a quarter of a mile in rear of Marmaduke.

When Sergeant Hiner returned and reported that Blunt was not coming, he and I rode back to the summit of the divide and meeting Col. Blair, held a brief council of war. Marmaduke's lines were in our immediate front and Fagan's troops in full view on the farther side of the creek. I said to Blair that we must break those lines north of the creek with a charge, and force a general battle; else Price would be in Fort Scott that night.

Just then two of Pleasanton's brigades, commanded by Colonels Phillips and Benteen, were coming up the hill, or rather a gentle ascending slope, with Phillips in advance to the right of the road and Benteen in his left rear on the opposite side. After consulting a few minutes while these brigades were advancing, Hiner and I rode down, and, meeting the commanding officer of the nearest brigade



(who I afterwards learned was Colonel Phillips of Pleasanton's division), I explained to him the position of the enemy, and suggested that he form his brigade and move forward in position for a charge. I told him that I would see the commanding officer of the other advancing brigade and ask him to do likewise.

While Colonel Phillips was forming his brigade and moving forward to the summit of the elevated plateau, directly in front of Marmaduke's left and centre, I rode over and explained to the commanding officer of the other advancing brigade—Lieutenant-Colonel Benteen—the situation of the enemy's lines, and asked him to form for a charge on the left of Phillips's brigade, then in line under a raking fire from the Rebel artillery.

In forming his line Colonel Benteen made a mistake by throwing his brigade left-front into line and leaving a gap between his right and Phillips's left—plainly visible to Marmaduke. Benteen should have thrown his rear regiment right-front into line and filled up the gap. His line as formed extended far beyond Marmaduke's right flank, while Phillips's right did not reach quite as far as Marmaduke's left.

The lines of Phillips and Benteen, when formed, faced almost due south, while Marmaduke's first line conformed to a bend in the creek, which on his right rear extended north several hundred yards from a due east-and-west line. That, of course, brought Benteen's line proportionately nearer to Marmaduke's right than was Phillips's right to Marmaduke's left. Besides, it brought Marmaduke's right almost opposite Benteen's centre and that was why one of his regiments had to move from left to right of his brigade after the charge had been sounded.

By reason of Marmaduke's lines extending in a northeasterly direction from left to right, Phillips's brigade had to ride in the charge some two hundred yards farther than Benteen's before the crash came; and again, Phillips's brigade, while in line waiting for Benteen to form, was under a galling fire from the enemy's artillery, which was kept up from the moment he ordered or sounded the charge until his line was within fifty paces of Marmaduke's first line.

Both brigades advanced to the charge about the same instant, but Benteen having less distance to ride, struck and staggered Marmaduke's extreme right while Phillips was yet advancing; but within two minutes the additional distance was covered and the clash of steel rang aloud all along the line. In good time Major Hopkins with

his battalion dashed in and closed the gap between the two brigades. For twenty minutes, officers and men, Feds and Confeds, were all mixed in a life and death struggle. The roar of musketry, the rattle of rifles and pistols, the clash of sabres, and the shrieks of the wounded, created a scene that was perfectly awful.

Steadily the gallant Union soldiers cut their way through the red glare and over a wall of guns and batteries of artillery, until the shouts of victory were heard over and above the din of battle. Slowly the enemy's lines melted away, and one by one their Generals, Colonels, and battalions laid down their arms and passed to the rear as prisoners of war. My sword was not laid down, but in the thick of the fight it was shivered in pieces on a gun that protected the head of a fighting Rebel.

Within thirty minutes after his lines were broken, Marmaduke and the flower of his division were prisoners, and the remainder of his troops were fleeing as though they expected the devil to take the hindmost. They threw away their guns and fell over each other while crossing Mine Creek. General Fagan, seeing Marmaduke's disaster, halted and formed his division in line of battle about a quarter of a mile to cover the retreat of those who might escape.

Phillips and Benteen, with their men whose horses were serviceable, and Major Hopkins, with a light battalion of the Second Kansas, and Captain Green, with two companies of the Second Colorado, followed the retreating Rebels across the creek and captured prisoners within range of Fagan's line.

When the broad prairie between the creek and Fagan's line was cleared of fleeing Rebels, we began forming a line south of the creek and in Fagan's immediate front for a second charge. I threw Major Hopkins and Captain Green with their battalions on the right. Phillips's men that had crossed the creek were rapidly forming in the centre, and Benteen's men who had crossed lower down were coming into line on the left.

We already had in our new line about one thousand men, and were waiting for two or three companies of Benteen's brigade that were coming at a gallop. A second charge would have been made in less than ten minutes, had it not been for an order from General Pleasanton to remain where we were until further orders were received. On receipt of this order, I naturally supposed that he was coming to the front with the remainder of his division to take ad-

vantage of the demoralized condition of the enemy produced by the first charge.

Marmaduke's division, for fighting purposes, had been utterly destroyed and all the officers and soldiers at the front knew that fact. That the demoralization would extend to Fagan's division, we had good reason to believe; and on that account we were preparing for a second charge. After the order to halt was received, the remainder of Benteen's men who were south of the creek came up and completed the formation of the new line.

Then and there, we had about twelve hundred and fifty men, burning with zeal and flushed with victory, facing about an equal number of Price's demoralized troops on the open prairie; and yet we were not allowed to move. For twenty minutes the men sat erect in their saddles waiting impatiently for the order to advance. While thus waiting, the enemy in our front broke from line into column and left the field in haste. Our line was then broken up, and the officers and men rejoined their respective commands.

While Phillips and Benteen were exterminating Marmaduke's division by a most gallant and desperate cavalry charge, and while their men, reinforced by the Kansas and Colorado battalions, were in line awaiting the order for a second charge, the three major-generals in command of the army and the divisions remained at the rear with most of their troops and artillery, seemingly indifferent about what was going on at the front.

One entire division—except two light battalions, and two brigades of the other division, all commanded by generals—was held back in the rear while two young colonels with their brigades forged their way to the front and destroyed Marmaduke's division. Had these two colonels with their light brigades been supported by the generals and their troops, as they should have been, Price and his army would have been eliminated from the Confederate equation before the sun went down on that memorable day.

*From Kansas in the Sixties, Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1911.*



### III.

## Kansas Immigrants

*The ink on the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was hardly dry before both North and South were making organized efforts to win the slavery contest by pouring settlers into Kansas. This contest populated the eastern third of the state; and in the end New England Puritanism won, whether the settlers came directly from New England or states farther west. Following the War, the Homestead Law encouraged Union soldiers to settle in Kansas and by 1885 the census showed nearly 100,000 Kansans had served in the Union army. The newly built railroads, which had received large land grants, fostered the settlement of the middle third of the state in the seventies and eighties. The Kansas Pacific sold thousands of acres for colonization, to the Swedes in Saline County, to the Scotch in Dickinson; and the Santa Fe sold 100,000 acres in Harvey, Reno, and Marion counties to the Mennonites, who came from Russia. At this time, also, several thousand ex-slaves came to Kansas in what was known as the "Exodus." The western third of the state was not settled until around 1900 and was permanently conquered only after the introduction of power machinery in farming.*

### *The Kansas Andover Band*

by RICHARD CORDLEY

[Richard Cordley, a pioneer minister, wrote, in addition to the volume from which this selection is taken, *A History of Lawrence, Kansas*. A biographical sketch is printed with "Lizzie and the Underground Railroad."]

. . . IN THE SUMMER of 1856 a Kansas Band was formed in Andover Seminary. It consisted originally of four members of the Middle Class, Sylvester Dana Storrs, Grovesnor C. Morse, Roswell Davenport Parker and Richard Cordley. These four agreed to go to Kansas after graduation and make that territory their field of labor. The band owed its existence to the heart and brain of Sylvester D. Storrs, who first suggested it and worked persistently for its success. Its first inspiration was due to the Kansas troubles which were then at their height, but the chief thought was to help to develop a Christian State in the center of the continent.

The band met weekly in Mr. Storrs' room and held a Kansas prayer-meeting. After the prayer-meeting an hour was spent in studying the Kansas situation, reading letters from friends in the territory, and interchanging views. As the condition in Kansas became more serious the interest in the band widened. The Kansas prayer-meeting was one of the events of the week. Often the room was full. The band grew to a membership of sixteen, and all the classes in the seminary were represented. Sometimes a friend fresh from Kansas would stop off and spend the evening with us, and we would learn by word of mouth the things we wanted to know. Rev. Louis Bodwell, the pastor at Topeka, visited Andover in the spring of 1857, and spent several days with us. He had taken much interest in the band from the first, and his counsel was of great value to us. He was full of enthusiasm and well informed, and his presence gave a sense of reality to the whole scheme.

At these meetings we talked over our plans and exchanged ideas of work. We did not say much about location. Things were too indefinite even to guess where we each might be. We were simply going to Kansas. That was as far as we cared to look, in fact as far as we could look. But we discussed our work, and talked of the things which ought to be done. Among other things we talked of the Christian college which Congregationalists had been in the habit of planting wherever they went. Of course we should plant a college in Kansas. Later on we were delighted to learn that the brethren on the field were discussing the same thing. We should be glad to co-operate with them. One evening we had with us a missionary from the region of the Euphrates—a Dr. Williams. He gave a very charming account of the excavations at Nineveh, and of the wonderful slabs of marble which were being taken from the ruins. These slabs were covered with hieroglyphics which were supposed to be of great historic value. Before leaving he promised to send us two of these slabs for the collection in the Kansas college. He returned to his field in about a year, and soon after shipped to us two of the finest slabs ever taken from Nineveh ruins. But when the slabs arrived in Andover, we were on our fields in Kansas, and we did not find it easy to spare the money for a big freight bill on stones from across the sea. We found no interest in the matter among the churches, and were compelled to leave them to be sold for the freight. Andover Seminary paid the charges, and became possessed of two of the finest Nineveh slabs ever brought to this country.

About May, 1857, Dr. Milton Badger, senior secretary of the American Home Missionary Society, visited us to arrange the terms for our going out. He was greatly interested in our project, and assured us that the society would do everything possible to aid us. It was arranged that we should go out under commission of the society and find our special fields of labor after reaching the territory. We were therefore not assigned to any field, but simply charged "to proclaim the gospel in Kansas." For this they pledged to each of us a salary of \$600. By this time affairs in Kansas had become more quiet, and interest in our band had become more contracted. Only the four original members remained. In July we graduated, and each went his own way. As we parted it was understood that we were to make our way to Kansas in the autumn. In this matter each one sought his own convenience, and we reached our fields one by one as best we could. During the summer there came to be an understanding as to our locations, and we lost no time in finding our work. Storrs went to Quindaro, Morse to Emporia, Cordley to Lawrence, and Parker to Leavenworth. All this came about almost by chance, and yet we could hardly have chosen better locations either for service or cooperation.

Sylvester D. Storrs was the first to go, reaching Kansas in early autumn. Mr. Storrs had commenced his preparations for the ministry after being in business for himself. Having decided upon the ministry, he worked his way through the academy and through Dartmouth College and Andover Seminary. He was a man of rare business gifts and tireless energy. On entering Andover Seminary he rented a piece of ground and planted it with choice nursery stock. Before he left Andover, three years later, he had thirty thousand young fruit-trees of the finest varieties to sell. He was an expert in grafting, and the farmers for miles around used to engage him to graft their large orchards with his choice fruit. In laying out grounds he was a genius, and any citizen of Andover thought himself fortunate if he could induce Brother Storrs to take the oversight of his garden and grounds. He knew just where the best potatoes grew in that paradise of the potato, Northern New England. If any of the faculty found the "Common taters" disagreeing with him, he only had to whisper it to Brother Storrs, and in a few days he would fill his cellar with the choicest peachblows. He taught classes in two Sunday-schools, and held mission services in out-of-the-way neighborhoods almost every Sunday. In Andover he found a moribund



temperance society which he resuscitated and enlarged. He made it a literary and social club for mill hands and working people in Andover, and a benevolent society to look after the poor and sick. He carried on more business out of school hours than one in a thousand could manage with all his time. He had such a remarkable facility for making everything move which he touched, that he was able to do all these divers things without infringing on his hours of recitation or study. All the people for miles around knew him, and years after they would inquire about "Brother Storrs" when the rest of the class had been forgotten.

At this time Quindaro was being advertised in Free State papers as the "Future Great" of the West. It was to be the "port of entry" for Kansas. It was pre-eminently the "Free State town." We all therefore shipped our books and goods to Quindaro, and in due time followed ourselves. Brother Storrs being the first to arrive in the autumn of 1857, he was captured by the enterprising colony and chosen as its pastor. In a few months he organized a church and completed the house of worship which he found already begun. He also supplied the "neighboring village" of Wyandotte as an "out-station." The following summer he founded a church there also, which is now the "First Church of Kansas City, Kansas." He reached out to Olathe, "twenty miles away," and the church there began in his labors. After five years at Quindaro he resigned to accept a call to Atchison. At Atchison he found the church worshipping in the basement of an unfinished building. There were neither sidewalks nor steps. They had but few members and a small congregation, and were known in the city, where the flavor of border ruffianism still lingered, as the "nigger church." They were indeed "a feeble folk." Here he labored five years. When he resigned he left the church self-supporting, with a fine building finished and accessible, and furnished with organ and bell. For twelve years he served the American Home Missionary Society as Superintendent of Missions. When he accepted the office, in 1872, there were only seventy-eight Congregational churches in the state. When he left, in 1884, there were one hundred and eighty-nine.

The second man to reach the territory was Grovesnor C. Morse. He was a native of New Hampshire and had graduated at Dartmouth College and Andover Seminary. He had come to find the frontier, so he kept on westward until he came to the Neosho River. Here he found men staking out a new town. The town was only a few weeks

old, and consisted of some tents and shanties. He thought this was sufficiently new, and he cast in his lot with Emporia. He secured a fine claim near by. Soon he organized a church and built a house of worship. He had been a teacher in his youth and was profoundly interested in education. A few years after coming to Kansas he was chosen Superintendent of Schools for what is now Lyon County. He used to lecture in various neighborhoods, stirring the people up in regard to the establishment of schools. To this day there are those all over the county who remember with interest his visits and lectures.

He took great interest in the opening and development of the State Normal School, and probably gave that institution more gratuitous labor than any other man. In December, 1864, he was chosen secretary of the Board of Directors, and commissioned by the Board to secure a competent man for president. The legislature, in locating the school at Emporia, appropriated the sum of \$1,000 for its support. The appropriation was so absurdly small that it is doubtful if anything would have been done but for the faith and enthusiasm of Brother Morse. He started at once to find a president. The nearest railway station was Leavenworth, three days' journey, which was made on horseback. At the close of one dreary winter day we were just drawing around "the fire on the hearth" for the evening in our home at Lawrence. A drizzling rain was falling and freezing as it fell. There came a rap at the door. Wondering what errand could bring any one out on such a pitiless night, I opened the door. There stood Brother Morse, cased in ice from head to foot. We got him out of his casement as soon as possible, and seated him by the fire to thaw him out, while I took care of the pony. After he had eaten supper I asked him to explain his mission. He was on his way to Chicago to find a man to take charge of the State Normal School. He had been already two days in the saddle, and must ride one day more. Then he would leave his pony at Leavenworth, and go by rail to Chicago. He was full of his plans for opening the school, and had no more doubt of his success than if he had ten thousand dollars instead of one. The next morning early he went on his journey. At Chicago he failed to secure the man he had in mind, and posted off at once to Bloomington, where he found a young man who was willing to take his chances and go to Emporia and open the Kansas State Normal School with \$1,000. That young man was Lyman B.

Kellogg, first president of the Kansas State Normal School, and more recently Attorney-General of the State of Kansas.

Mr. Morse continued as pastor of the Emporia church for more than ten years. He considered the whole surrounding country his parish, however. He preached for a time at Council Grove, twenty-four miles northwest, and founded the church there. He also preached occasionally at Eureka, fifty miles south. In 1869 he lost his life by an accident. The whole city was in mourning. The citizens of Emporia without distinction erected a monument to his memory. But the most enduring monuments are the Congregational Church of Emporia and the State Normal School. He did not live to see the full result of his work, either in the church or in the school; but like God's worthies in other ages, "he obtained a good report," though he received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for him.

The third member of the band to reach Kansas was Roswell Davenport Parker. He was a native of New York, though brought up in Michigan. He graduated at the Michigan State University in 1854. On graduation at Andover Seminary in 1857, he came at once to Kansas. After consultation, he concluded to go to Leavenworth. This was the largest town in the territory and was growing very rapidly. Buildings were going up in all directions and people were coming from all quarters. Large warehouses were begun and immense stocks of goods were being brought in. Real estate was high and rising, and real estate speculation wild. The place had the air and promise of a great metropolis. Mr. Parker came into this whirl of business to preach the gospel. He had nothing to guide him except the assurance that among so many people there must surely be some who had come from Congregational churches. He secured a room for his services on the business street and advertised them in the daily papers. Whether he would find his room full or empty the next Sabbath morning was one of the things that he must wait to know. He did find a considerable congregation of attentive hearers. In a short time he gathered a good number of those who were interested in his movement. They were all strangers to each other, as they were strangers to him, each thinking himself alone. A little later, when brought together in a sociable, they were all surprised that there was so large a number of them, and delighted to find themselves in such good company. Mr. Parker at once set in operation all the services of a church, preaching twice every Sabbath, or-



ganizing a Sunday-school, and starting a prayer-meeting. He himself acted in the capacity of pastor, deacon, trustee, sexton and clerk. When the church came to be organized in the March following, there were found to be seven different denominations represented in the membership. It was a goodly fellowship. They were mostly young people just entering upon their life career.

After two years' services at Leavenworth, Mr. Parker accepted a call from the church at Wyandotte, now Kansas City, Kansas. Here he remained eight years, building and equipping a house of worship, bringing the church to self-support and a good degree of strength. He was there during the most critical period of Kansas history. During the war Wyandotte was in constant peril. Three miles away began the thickets and ravines among which the bushwhackers had their homes. These thickets extended almost without interruption around Kansas City for twenty miles to the hills and ravines of the Sni and the Blue Rivers. It was nature's own hiding-place. The bushwhackers could come within an hour's ride of Wyandotte without being seen or suspected. The whole country was alive with them. Nearly every night the heavens were lighted by some burning house in the region, sometimes ten miles away, sometimes only three or four. The people of Wyandotte had to be continually on guard. Mr. Parker took his place with the rest, shouldering his musket, or standing guard at night, as the order might be. Every few nights some alarm would call him from his bed to the place of rendezvous. His church bell was rung as the signal of danger, and his church was used by the citizens in assemblies for defense. Several times the town was used as a hospital, and wounded soldiers from the battle-fields of Southwest Missouri and Arkansas, and the sick from the camps, were sent there to be cared for. In these extemporized hospitals Mr. Parker did the work, without the name or pay of a chaplain.

The last member of the band to reach Kansas was the writer of these sketches. I was born in Nottingham, England, September 6, 1829. In 1833, when I was four years old, my parents emigrated to America. They sailed from Hull to Quebec, and thence up the St. Lawrence to Montreal, and over Lake Champlain to Troy, then an important center. There they found everybody going west, to Michigan. . . . My father found a piece of land that suited him some fifteen miles southwest from Ann Arbor. He was a great lover of the beautiful, and chose the place on account of a lovely little lake, which was set like a gem in the woods. We began to build our cabin,

and had it only partially completed when winter overtook us. . . . In 1838, largely through my father's influence, a school district was organized, and a log schoolhouse was built. . . . It was a very primitive affair, and the winter winds found many an opening between the small tamarack logs, and so found us little fellows as we dangled our feet from the rude benches and shivered. . . . After a few years my father arranged for me to attend school at Ann Arbor every winter. In this way I prepared for college, and graduated from Michigan University in 1854, and from Andover Theological Seminary in 1857. . . .

This synopsis of the Andover Band would hardly be complete without a notice of another person who was never a member of the band, but was closely associated with them in all their work and in all their history. This was Rev. Louis Bodwell. He was in Kansas a year before they came, and kept them informed of the condition of affairs. He was their most reliable correspondent. When they arrived in Kansas he rendered inestimable service, and in all the years after, he was associated with them as friend and counselor in every movement and effort.

Louis Bodwell was born in New Haven, Connecticut, September, 1827. He was of genuine Puritan stock, one of his ancestors having been chaplain of the parliamentary committee which treated with Charles I of England, who lost his throne and his head in consequence of Cromwell's victory at Naseby. Those who knew Mr. Bodwell will not hesitate to affirm that he retained all the force and firmness of his Puritan ancestry. At the age of twenty he was converted to Christ, and two years later gave himself to the gospel ministry. He undertook to prepare himself for this work by alternately studying and teaching. His health gave way under the double strain, and he was never able to complete the course he had marked out for himself. But he was an incessant student all his life, and in many lines he was a very thorough scholar. In 1855 he became pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Truxton, New York. A year later, however, the Kansas excitement came to its height, and the question at issue took a profound hold on Mr. Bodwell.

The Kansas conflict had come to its climax. The Missouri River had been blockaded by the Missourians, and all Free State men coming up on steamboats were turned back. The highways through Missouri were also guarded at every point. But where there is a will there is a way, and in this case there was a tremendous will, and a

way was found through Iowa and Nebraska. Mr. Bodwell and his brother Sherman overtook a company of emigrants at Iowa City, and proceeded with them. When they reached Tabor, Iowa, they stopped for several days and rested. On Sunday Mr. Bodwell preached on the village green, from the text: "In your patience possess ye your souls." On Monday they moved on, crossing the Missouri River into Nebraska. Then they turned south, and on the 10th day of October reached the Kansas line. They were met here by the United States marshal and three hundred United States cavalry, and put under arrest. The following day they were marched twenty-seven miles under a strong military guard. The next day, October 12th, was Sunday, and they were marched fifteen miles to Straight Creek, where they encamped. There in the evening by the camp-fire, Mr. Bodwell, a "prisoner of the Lord," like Paul, preached to his fellow prisoners his first sermon in Kansas. His text was "Lo, I am with you alway." . . .

On Monday they moved on, still under guard, and on Tuesday they reached the ferry over the Kansas River near Topeka. Here Governor Geary met them, and becoming satisfied in regard to their peaceful intentions, released them from custody, and let them go their several ways.

Mr. Bodwell pushed on to Topeka, and on October 26 he preached his first sermon in his new "parish." He had an audience of about thirty, sitting on boxes and slab benches in "Constitution Hall." November 1 he gave the "Preparatory Lecture" in the same hall to three hearers, increased to six before the close of the service. The next Sunday he administered the communion, the first time it had been administered in the State capital. Of the nine members of his church, two were absent from the territory; one was lying very ill; two were in prison at Leocompton; and three only were present. But there were others who joined with them, strangers and members of other churches. "They had a very precious season," the record says.

Mr. Bodwell was one of those unique characters who leave their mark wherever they go. He was full of vigor and energy, and true as steel to his principles and friends. He was a stalwart of the stalwarts, a radical of the radicals, yet clear in judgment and safe in counsel. He was ready for an emergency, and "brave as any soldier bearded like a pard." Yet he was gentle as a woman, full of tender sympathies and quick to respond to any call of need or sorrow. He could be in



more places in a given time, and push more things along, than almost any man I ever saw. He worked with an energy that never flagged, and with an enthusiasm that never cooled. He never flinched from any responsibility. If there was a bold thing that ought to be said, he said it. If there was a daring thing that ought to be done, he did it. When John Brown led his last company of slaves toward the North Star, Mr. Bodwell was one of the few who volunteered to see him safely over the Nebraska line. Whenever men were needed for defense, he was among the first to mount his pony and hasten to the post of danger. . . .

From *Pioneer Days in Kansas*, New York: Pilgrims Press, 1903.

## *History of Sun-Gold Section*

by EUGENE F. WARE

[Eugene F. Ware was born at Hartford, Connecticut, and moved with his parents to Iowa while yet a boy. From that state he enlisted in the Union army, coming to Kansas in 1867. In addition to farming, he studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1871. He practiced law in Ft. Scott, Topeka, and Kansas City, and was active in politics. In 1872 he began writing poetry under the name of "Ironquill."]

. . . AS WE WERE GOING southwest we all at once crossed on a high prairie a north and south road that appeared very much traveled. All at once Mr. Campbell, who was sitting in the front seat with his son, directed his son to turn to the right and follow the main road to the right, going north. I spoke and asked what was the cause of it. He said: "I am not going to go any farther south." I began to remonstrate and told him that we had passed through the worst country of our trip, that when we got out towards southeastern Kansas, it would be better. But the old gentleman was obdurate and said: "I am going back to Iowa; not a cent will I put into such a country as Missouri. I will not invest a dollar in such a state." The boys began to protest to their father against going back and a very angry controversy arose between them to which I was a silent spectator. When we had passed through Kirksville I had received a lot of letters from my sister, because we had made very slow progress, and among them were a great number of clippings which had been gathered from the state papers and published in the *Hawk Eye*,

very complimentary to me and very much regretting that my failure in health had deprived the state press of my services, etc. The clipping spoke complimentary and told of my going south for my health.

Under these circumstances, I could not very well afford to go back to Iowa. So, at a certain point of the debate between the old gentleman and his boys, I chipped in and said: "I do not believe that I care to go back to Iowa and if you want to go back, you can just leave my trunk here at the cross roads." The old gentleman hesitated for a while and then said: "We are going back." So, I let down the end gate of the wagon, took out my trunk and jug and said: "I am not going back. If you want to go back, you go."

I sat on my trunk, holding my saddle horse by the bridle rein, while the boys protested with their father. All at once the old gentleman turned to me and said, "If you leave me here, you have to pay for your board on the trip." Then he took a book out of his pocket and began to figure and the boys said: "Don't pay him a cent." Finally he figured up that I owed him \$7.94 as my share of subsistence which I should now pay him because I had deserted him. I got ready to pay, but the boys would not permit it; both of them said: "Don't pay him a cent." The boys did not want to go back, but finally the old gentleman said, "This is my outfit and everything belongs to me and I order you to get into the wagon and take me back home." The boys and the old gentleman, still quarreling, got into the wagon, turned northward and soon disappeared over the prairie, and I have never heard of them or anything about them from that day to this. I only know that the boys told the old gentleman that they were ashamed of the way he was treating me and that they wanted me to understand that they did not approve of it. What I blamed them for, however, was that they did not get out and stay with me because if they had shown the right kind of grit, the occurrence would not have happened, but the old gentleman had a great deal of money and was tyrannical and the boys were afraid to have a rupture with him. So, there I was sitting on my trunk on the prairie in a new country and only one house in sight and that far down south on the road.

As I sat on my trunk holding my horse, I cogitated what to do. I could not carry the trunk with me and so had to stay with it, and I thought I would have to wait until some farm wagon drove by.

After while a man came from a northern direction, driving a

team of horses to a farm wagon without any bed on it. He was riding on the rear hounds of the wagon. I asked him if he could haul my trunk to the house, which I saw far to the south, in the direction in which he was going. I then told him I would pay him for it. He assented and we got the trunk and jug aboard. He was very inquisitive in knowing who I was and where I was going and how I happened to be out on the prairie all alone with a trunk and what I had in the jug. I told him briefly that we had started down from Iowa to southern Missouri and that my people had backed out and had gone back and that I wanted to go on. I asked him if there was any work that could be done in that part of the country or if anybody wanted any help. He said there was a man down in the timber who was trying to find somebody who could burn brick; that he had started a brick kiln and had gotten the brick all in ready to burn and the man who was to do it had left the country.

Now it happened that I had seen brick burned often when I was a boy and was of the impression that all anybody had to do was to keep throwing in firewood, and I told the man that I would burn the kiln of brick and asked him to stop at the house when he came back and tell me if the man wanted me. So, when we got down to the house, he unloaded my trunk. I paid him a quarter in postal currency and he went on. I then went to the house to make arrangements for stopping and told them I was to have a job for burning brick, but to my surprise they refused to permit me to stop or even to let me store my trunk. They evidently thought I had been a soldier which was perhaps visible in my outfit, McClellan saddle and poncho. I was very much put out for I did not see another house in the neighborhood and to my questions as to where they thought I might get a place to stay they simply told me they did not know. So I went out and sat on my trunk on the road and it was getting along towards noon. I did not know exactly what course to pursue and thought I would wait until the man in the wagon came back. I had waited until I was worried and discouraged, when looking to the north I saw a row of whitetopped emigrant wagons coming down the road. I tied my horse to a post and walked up the road. As they came more visibly into sight I saw three men walking at the head of the train, about two hundred yards in advance, and all three of them had guns over their shoulders. Two of them had on what were then called "McClellan" army caps of an official cut.

The Grand Army of the Republic had been organized the fall



before and I was one of five charter members for Iowa. Just before I had left Burlington we had succeeded in forming a strong post and as these people appeared in view, by the time I had gotten within a hundred yards of them, I gave the G. A. R. hailing signal and it was responded to by the middle one of the three men who were marching ahead. On arriving, we shook hands, went off and had a private talk and I told him that I had been captain of Company F of the Seventh Iowa cavalry and he told me he had been a captain in Birge's sharpshooters, a regiment that I well knew. His name was Warren and the man to whom he introduced me on his right was a brother-in-law, Mr. Wesley Tibbetts, and the other was the latter's son-in-law. They said they were going down to southwestern Missouri to look at the country and pick up some cheap land. Without any trouble I entered into the following arrangement with them. They were to haul my trunk. I was to pay my share of mess board and my horse should pull in the team every third day, so my trunk was put in and off we went, the people at the house all standing and looking, two men and five women and several children in a large well built, two-story frame house, where I was so inhospitably received. I told the man whom we passed on the road that I could not stop to burn the brick and we went on a few miles and camped.

Captain Warren and I went out to buy some provisions, but found the country pretty well desolated. We stopped at a house where a woman was baking some corn-bread in a Dutch oven on the coals on a hearth. The woman was about forty. She spoke about her husband who would soon be in. Finally she introduced us to a boy who was about eighteen, who she said was her husband. I asked if it were not her son instead of her husband and she said, "No, I married him. What is a woman to do? My husband was killed during the war and there ain't any more men around. They've all been killed, and what is a woman to do? Why, she has to do the best she can. There was not any body for me to marry except him and he makes me a pretty good husband even if I am old enough to be his mother." This is a true picture of the desolation of the country after the war, in its theater.

We crossed the river near Brunswick and went on down south, turning to the southwest until we got south not far from Lamar in western Missouri. The country was practically deserted. The chimneys were standing lonesomely everywhere. Constant talk of murders was heard of, and fights between returning soldiers. It would appear

from what was told us that great outlawry prevailed. At this point a man coming from the southwest stopped us and asked us where we were going. He told us that the grasshoppers in Kansas were knee deep and when I ridiculed the idea he stuck to it. This was the last straw for several of the party who composed the train. Some turned northward and only three wagons of us went on. Captain Warren and I stayed together.

Bacon was fifty cents a pound. There was no flour in the country and corn-meal was five cents a pound, sixty pounds for three dollars.

Mr. Tibbetts had a relative at Carthage, as he supposed, so we went to Carthage, Missouri. It had been so thoroughly desolated by the war that there was hardly anything left of it. A man from the wreck of some old buildings was putting up a little wooden frame structure which he said was to be a harness shop. Here we held a council of war and determined that we would quit Missouri. It was debated quite a while as to whether we should go to Springfield, Missouri, or turn westward into Kansas. I think my voice turned the tide, for I advocated going into the Indian neutral lands south of Fort Scott, as I had heard that some settlers from Kansas had gone in and that there might be a prospect of the land being thrown open for settlement. So in we went, through what is now Cherokee county, Kansas, and went to the Neosho river and went into camp down near the mouth of Lightning creek, in what is now Cherokee county, about opposite Oswego. We just had to abandon Missouri. It looked to us then as an impossible country.

At the place near where we camped another old soldier named Sidney S. Smith, afterwards a very prominent citizen of the county and for years county treasurer, had put up a log cabin and had started a farm. Captain Warren and I got on horse-back and leaving everything in camp started over the country to make a selection of land. There were but very few settlers in the county and those were along the water courses and were mostly union soldiers of the late war. They wanted us to take up claims near them. We rode over the county week after week. I took up a claim at the head of Deer creek, as a temporary expedient, because there was a settler near there named Betzer who would break out some prairie for me and I employed him to break me twenty acres for \$80.

Captain Warren found a man who wanted to sell out his claim with log cabin on it and he made a deal with him for \$200. We wanted material for a house and as a man by the name of Motter

below the mouth of Lightning creek had put up a little temporary sawmill, we concluded to cut some lumber and have it sawed up. We went to the Neosho river bottom and found a man who claimed a bottom quarter and he told us to go in and haul away all of the down dead timber that we wanted; that it would save him the trouble of clearing. We went down to look at the timber. It was a perfect mass of ancient dead trees lapping over each other. There had apparently never been a fire and the big black walnuts were overlapping each other on the ground, and the bushes and young trees were so dense among them that we could hardly get through. There were black walnuts that had evidently fallen over a hundred years before.

Captain Warren and I picked out some fallen trees near the bank so that we could roll the logs to the river and commenced sawing up with a cross-cut saw, dry, thoroughly seasoned, black walnut logs, four feet in diameter. We worked about a month, got the logs into the river and got them sawed up into two-inch planks. It was the most beautiful lot of lumber I ever saw, but the work was very hard. The weather was hot in July, almost suffocating down in the timber, and the mosquitoes were in a perfect cloud. We built smudges to keep off the mosquitoes and worked in the heat and smoke. I was not yet strong enough to keep up with Captain Warren and from time to time I hired a young man to assist me; but I was getting on my feet fast, and had drunk up my jug of bitters and had filled it at the Missouri river crossing.

Our party had scattered. Captain Warren and I, while cutting the saw logs, slept up on the hay roof of the Smith stable above the range of the mosquitoes and we had a camp where we cooked fish, coffee and bacon, having our corn bread cooked in Mr. Smith's log cabin. Our camp was under a large water-oak tree. The weather was hot and the work was hard, but we got through. A team came along one day as we were getting low on bacon and we bought a pound for fifty cents, all the bacon the teamster would sell, and Warren hung it up on a tree out on the end of a limb. Coming home from work one evening, we saw a long, ravenous greyhound jumping up in the air to get that bacon. We yelled at the dog, but he was too far off. He finally got the bacon and sat down to eat it. His master came riding along on horse-back; the dog had run ahead of him. Warren said to the man: "What do you want for that dog?" The man replied: "What will you give?" Warren said: "Fifty cents." The man said: "He is yours." Warren then turned to me and said, "Give me a



quarter." I asked: "What do we want that dog for?" Warren replied: "To get our bacon back." So we bought the dog. The dog was a good one and Warren kept him. We caught lots of fine fish and almost lived on them.

One day the Tibbetts party came down to hunt us and said that somebody had to go east for family supplies, that there was neither bacon nor corn-meal left in the country. Warren agreed that if I would go with Tibbetts and the wagon and get supplies, he would see that the logs were all put into lumber and piled up at the mill and I agreed to it. We started east and reached a store that had been opened on the route near the Missouri line. We stopped there to talk about food, and cornmeal was 6 cents a pound and bacon was 60, so we kept on east and we went east until we got well up into Missouri nearly a hundred miles east of Kansas. We struck a little new water mill up north of Springfield and bought corn-meal for \$2 a bushel and bacon at 50 cents. We bought a little more than we thought we might need and we sold a storekeeper, back in Kansas, some of the meal for \$2.50 and some of the bacon for 75 cents.

When I got back, my lumber was piled up—my share, Warren's share and the mill owner's share. Mine were two-inch broad boards and I had them hauled up to my temporary claim where breaking was going on. About that time Warren got news that his wife would be in Sedalia on a certain day and said he would go up in an ox team and bring her back. There being no corn-meal in the country, or oats or horse feed except green grass, an ox team was the best rig.

Just as we got ready to start a prolonged rain set in. The roads became impassable and we had to go up to Fort Scott on the ridges and it was then that I first got a good view of "Sun-Gold Section." There was not a settler within miles of it and deer were very numerous and were playing around over the country plainly visible. I had determined to go up with Warren in his rig and ride my horse and get another supply of the doctor's medicine. We arrived at Sedalia. Warren loaded up his wife and a quantity of trunks and furniture and was about to start back. I made up my mind that I would ride on up to Burlington, Iowa, to tell my father and mother what a beautiful country I had found, and get them to sell out and move down into Kansas. The place I had considered the best was Fort Scott, through which town Warren and I took our ox team. I was feeling much better. The weather was cheerful and after I left

Sedalia I made 40 miles a day on horseback and soon arrived in Burlington, having been gone about four months.

I was feeling better on my return but somehow when I got to sleeping indoors and neglecting active outdoor exercise my bad feelings quickly returned. I had a consultation with Doctor Nassau and he told me that if I would continue his treatment, he felt sure of my recovery. About this time I got a letter from Captain Warren which stated that some men had jumped my claim, which gave me considerable solicitude. In the meantime I had depicted the advantages of Fort Scott and southern Kansas to my parents and my father was inclined to consider a change.

My father had been ill for some time and had discovered that his partner was getting away with him and my father desired some pretext for selling out the business and dissolving the partnership. I may say that he afterwards did that and moved to Fort Scott, but I started with my horse back to Kansas. I went down to the Mississippi river at Burlington, led my horse on to a steamboat bound for St. Louis and soon arrived there. All of the steamboats had horse stalls on the lower deck, together with feed, and there was much traffic of that kind. On arriving at St. Louis, the boat having made a quick trip, I led my horse on to a Kansas City boat and soon got up the river to Kansas City. From there I wrote Captain Warren that I was coming down to shoot both of them. In those days that was the way people talked, and down in the Indian country that was the way people did. I sent my letter to Oswego at which point, then only a village, Captain Warren got his mail, which ran every week. I then rode down on horse-back to Fort Scott and then I pushed on down to Captain Warren, making a ride of 145 miles. He had communicated my message and when I got to my place I found it deserted. The persons who had jumped it had moved off.

I found my twenty acres broken out in good shape. I paid for the breaking, settled up with Captain Warren on our lumber deal, got my lumber and a lot of posts hauled up to my claim and then went up to Fort Scott and worked at the harness business all winter until the first of March. Then, Kansas City being the nearest place, I hired a wagon to haul down from there to the claim a load of spring wheat and I hired a man to put it in. I came down to my claim and put up my black walnut shanty, ten feet wide and sixteen feet long, with a lean-to roof. One end of the shanty was occupied by a large sod fire-place which being built on the outside formed one

side of the shanty. The four corners were made of black walnut posts about six inches in diameter. I let them down into the ground in a hole, dug with a post auger which I had bought. A visitor watching the performance said that I was building a very nice house and was "mortising the corners into the earth." I bought a team of good horses, plows and other implements and started in sleeping, batching, and holding the claim until I could select something in the shape of a square section which I wanted for the whole family. As soon as my wheat was in and my garden planted I started out to find what I wanted. In the meanwhile other settlers had come in but they mostly settled along the creeks and stream beds. I went out and made continuous explorations of the country on the upland, doing what work was necessary at the Deer creek claim, but I rode constantly all over the county. I found several places which I thought would do; one down in the southern part of the county; one on the stream east of where Columbus now stands; but finally I picked out the hill on "Sun-Gold Section" and concluded that I would take up a square mile; a one quarter for myself, one quarter for father and one for each of my two brothers. There were 100 square miles of vacant territory there and I had my choice.

It was the country that I had seen the year before, 1867, when Warren and I went up to Fort Scott. During the time, and I think it was during the winter, the government had surveyed the township lines of the Neutral land, but had not yet sectionized it. So in order to locate my land I hunted up a township corner, and by measuring a mile west I could get the section line. I first stepped it off and came quite close to it and made my plans in accordance with it. Afterwards a lone darkey, who lived down in the Indian territory, passed through. He was about twenty years of age and I hired him to help me. I went to Cherry creek about five miles below "Sun-Gold Section," where there was some vacant timber and I cut foundation logs and hauled four of them up onto the N. E. quarter and afterwards went back and cut four more and put them on the rising ground of the S. W. quarter.

I also joined the Deer creek club and will briefly explain the pioneer law of the times. There being no civil organization of any kind, that is to say, no counties, townships or local officers, the people formed into clubs and by a majority vote made such local laws as they cared to have, based upon other laws of the state.

The club ordered that for a person to take up a claim he must go



on it personally with a witness and say he took it as his homestead. In order to mark the place, a stake was driven down with the date and the man's name on a piece of paper attached to the stake. It was very often that a simple envelope covering a letter that had been received slipped down over the stake. Within ten days a claimant must put on what was called the foundation of his house. He was supposed to build a log cabin on the land not less than 12 feet square. The foundation was four logs, not less than 12 feet each in length, put in square form on the land. Sometimes these were merely poles, but the rule was that they should be at least six inches in diameter. At the time of the laying of the foundation a stake was driven with the new date of the laying of the foundation. If the land which was taken was not a square quarter, but consisted of forty-acre tracts, arranged otherwise than as a square, the claim stake must specify the 40's. From the time of the laying of the foundation six months was given within which, in contemplation of club law, the man had an opportunity to go back to the states and get his family. If he did not come back within six months, or caused nothing further to be done on the land, anybody could jump the claim. Every person who joined the Club signed a book with the statement written out that he agreed to abide by the club rules and assist any worthy neighbor whose claim should be jumped or should be mistreated by anybody. As stated, I put up two foundations on "Sun-Gold Section" and finally put up two more near the center. Afterwards the land was surveyed and sectionized by the government. Shortly thereafter, finding the definite boundaries, I relocated the foundations and afterwards, in the fall of 1868, I again relocated the foundations and put up new claim stakes so as to carry my right through the winter until next spring and I offered my Deer creek claim for sale.

The year 1868 was a very dry year and there came in but very few people and the land was reported to have been sold in a body to a railroad company which kept out very many immigrants.

In the meantime my father and two brothers had come to Fort Scott and I took my two brothers down to the farm and introduced them around and told everybody where their claims were. I also got my father and mother to come down from Fort Scott where they had located, to make me a brief visit on the claim, which they did, driving in a double buggy, coming down one day, staying one day and going back in a day.

I went up and worked all of the winter at the harness business

again, and in the spring came down and put my twenty acres into corn. This was in 1869. That summer's work was a very profitable year. I cleared \$1,400 in cash from what I raised. The immigration which came paid about \$1.25 a bushel for corn and fifteen cents a shock for fodder. I had cut up all of my twenty acres into fourteen hill squares. This was on the Deer creek claim. My brother and I then went over to "Sun-Gold Section." Under the law the building should begin on "Sun-Gold Section," and I went down to the mill, hauled up some lumber and measured the exact center of the section. I sowed a whole lot of blue grass seed among the prairie grass in the swales. I broke, around the house, about five acres of ground to be used as a garden. One fourth of it being on each quarter section and for each member of the family. I set up stakes around the section so that we could plow a hedge row, hedges being at that time in great favor. Certain farmers near Fort Scott made a specialty of planting hedge seed and selling hedge plants in great numbers for hedges. I had set out on Deer creek claim alongside of my cornfield enough seed to make hedge plants to go around the section.

I forgot to say that during the summer of 1868 my brother Robert came down to see me and I took him over to show him "Sun-Gold Section." We rode over in a farm wagon, took blankets and horse feed and determined to stay all night and carefully inspect the land. As we got to the hill on the section, it began to rain. We took off our wagon box, inverted it upon the ground and, tying our horses to the wheels of our wagon, we got under our wagon bed to keep out of the rain and we ate our lunch lying down while it was raining. It was only a passing shower, but before it was over we became aware that we were down over several nests of big, fierce, black ants. It got so we could not stand it any longer so we peeled off our clothes, threw them under the wagon bed and danced around in the rain and got rid of the ants. When the rain was over, the ground being soaking wet, we concluded to go back home and come again.

Late in 1869 I went back to Fort Scott and went to work at the harness business. I was by this time made over. I had long since stopped drinking Doctor Nassau's prescription. I was a new man. I had none of the thoughts or ideas which I formerly had. I did not feel the same way, think the same way, nor act as if I were the same person. I had lived one life and was now living an entirely different one, as much so as if I were an entirely different individual. I had different view of things, different aspirations, different taste for

reading, society and work. We arranged to be down on the farm, my two brothers and I, on the first of March in 1870. My brother, Charlie, went to school during the winters. My brother Robert was a skillful saddle hand and worked off and on as he pleased and kept a separate business account of his own. His claim was the northwest quarter. We started in the spring of 1870, two or three days late, from Fort Scott, came down to Bone creek to camp, intending to reach the farm by supper time. We were a little delayed and did not get to "Sun-Gold Section" until about the third or fourth of March and it was about 8 o'clock at night. Coming on to the land at night, we found a hedge row twenty feet wide broken around the section and we heard a crowd of men driving off in a team laughing and shouting. We did not understand it until morning. We found our house opened and some cooking utensils and bedding there in the house which somebody had left. In the morning we found a little box shanty about ten feet square had been erected on my brother Robert's quarter, near the northwest corner, and about five acres of land broken on it. On the southwest quarter was another little house. We were armed with my Colt cavalry revolvers and a shot gun. In the morning I had my father and two brothers get into the wagon and we went over to the shanty on the southwest quarter and found a man in there with a trunk, Dutch bake oven, food supplies and a horse tied to a knothole in the shanty. A pile of straw was in front of it. Upon inquiry as to what he was doing there, he said he had taken the quarter section and that he and his crowd, which he said consisted of ten men, had taken charge of the section. When I told him that it was our section, he said that our rights had lapsed; that we had not been on it long enough and had been away too long. I told him that he could not come and take our property in that way and that he would have to get off from the place. He said that he did not propose to get off from it and would stay by his claim. Thereupon, I covered him with a revolver; ordered my brothers and father to untie the horse; push the house over and load it up into the wagon. This they did. The house came apart in a very convenient way. I turned the halter strap of his horse over to him and told him to pack his things upon it and move. He was very mad and declined to do anything and then I told him that I would march him off from the section and this I did and I turned his horse loose and off it started on the run down Cherry creek, and was soon out of



sight and the fellow was on foot. I then let him go and told him that if I saw him on the claim again he would have a shooting match.

Having unloaded his shanty at the center of the section, we then started over to see the man at the northwest corner. As we got near the house he stepped out of the door of the shanty with a double barrelled shotgun loaded and cocked, and he covered us. I told my brother Robert to get around on the other side of him and I told the man that he could get one of us, but could not get both of us. He backed into the door and we got on both sides of the house. We determined that we would stay with him and not let him get out of the house. So two of us constantly watched the house each with a revolver and he stayed in it. Two or three persons came up to see him, but we told them that they could not see him. We expected that if there were ten men, they would rally and make us trouble. So we kept the shotgun in readiness at our own house and two constantly stayed around the claim jumper's shanty. We did not of course walk around close to the shanty but we walked around outside of effective range of his shotgun and he knew that if he fired we would begin throwing bullets through his shanty. Several persons came by and we told them all how things were and they all sided with us; and being an old soldier I had the full sympathy of the old soldiers, and finally one of them said he would go and raise some men to help me. After three days of siege, the occupant must have felt a little bit as if he were on the wrong side. I hailed him; went to the door at evening and told him that I would have a posse up there in the morning and that he might have a great deal of trouble. I told him that the old soldiers of the club would not permit me to fail in getting him.

The man was perhaps hungry and thirsty but he was still defiant. We were pretty well used up ourselves and when darkness came we slipped off home to get a square meal and some sleep. I concluded that night that the thing to do was to go and make him get right out of the house and make him get off of the land. So in the morning we drove on over and he saw us coming, and shouldering his shotgun he left the house and walked off a distance from it. We had an axe. We loosened up his house; then we took all of his household stuff, loaded it in the wagon and hauled it across the freshly plowed furrow line to the adjoining section and dumped it there for him. Then we went back and loaded up his house and took it to the center and made a hencoop of it. Off and on, that summer, owing to the break-

ing of the hedge row and the garden spot and the house, the claim became an object of envy and we kept finding claim stakes stuck up on the land from time to time all summer. It would appear that they came at night and stuck them up so as to have a talking point in case they could get sufficient strength to take the claim by force. . . .

From the *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, August, 1937.

## *A Day with the Mennonites*

by NOBLE L. PRENTIS

[Noble L. Prentis came to Kansas in 1869 as editor of the *Topeka Record*, having previously edited papers in Missouri and Illinois, taught school, worked as a printer, and served four years in the Union army. From 1869 until his death in 1900 he was connected with the *Topeka Record*, the *Topeka Commonwealth*, the *Lawrence Journal*, the *Junction City Union*, the *Atchison Champion*, and the *Kansas City Star*. He traveled extensively and wrote voluminously. His writings include five books.]

THERE HAS ALWAYS been something very interesting to me in the coming of different peoples to Kansas, and the blending of all of them into a community of interest and language. In my newspaper travels I have interviewed a half-dozen varieties of "colonists," among them the Hungarians, of Rawlins county, and the colored folks of Nicodemus, who came to Kansas from the distant and foreign shores of Kentucky.

By far the most extensive and notable immigration in the history of Kansas was that of the so-called "Russians," which began substantially in 1874, and which has resulted in the settlement of fifteen thousand Mennonites in the counties of Marion, Harvey, McPherson, Butler, Reno and Barton, besides the Catholic German-Russians, who have some settlements in Ellis county, on the line of the Kansas Pacific, and whose mud village of Herzog I visited in 1878.

The rallying-point of the Russian immigrants in 1874 and 1875 was Topeka, and that town abounded with sheepskin coats, ample breeches, bulbous petticoats, iron teakettles, and other objects supposed to be distinctively Russian, for many months. There was considerable competition between the two great land-grant roads—the

Kansas Pacific and the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe—to secure these people as settlers. With its usual good luck, the Santa Fe captured both the larger and better class, the Mennonites.

The Catholic Russians were from a remote part of Russia, the government of Saratov, and were the most foreign in their appearance. The men and boys had a custom of gathering on the street at night, near their quarters, and singing in concert. The music was of a peculiarly plaintive character, suggesting the wide, lonely steppes from whence they came. As I have said, they went out on the Kansas Pacific, where they seem to have pretty much disappeared from public view. In 1878, at Herzog, they had made very little progress.

The Mennonites seemed more at home in the country; and securing excellent lands from the Santa Fe company, soon disappeared from Topeka. In the summer of 1875, in company with Mr. C. B. Schmidt, then, as now, the Emigration Agent of the A. T. & S. F., who had been largely instrumental in settling them in Kansas, I visited a portion of the colonists, living in the villages of New Alexanderwohl, Hoffnungsthal and Gnadenau, in Harvey and Marion counties. The observations made on the occasion of that visit were embodied in an article in the Topeka *Commonwealth*, entitled "The Mennonites at Home." From that visit until yesterday, I had never seen the Mennonites, though I had often felt a great curiosity to observe for myself how they had succeeded.

In 1875 the Mennonites were still a strange people. They retained the little green flaring wagons they had brought from Russia, and were attempting to live here under the same rule they followed in Russia. The village of Gnadenau was the most pretentious of their villages. It was a long row of houses, mostly built of sod and thatched with long prairie grass. A few of the wealthier citizens had built frame houses, furnished with the brick ovens of Russian origin which warm the family and cook its food for all day with two armfuls of loose straw.

The land belonging in severalty to the villagers, lay around the settlement, some of it at a considerable distance, while near at hand was a large common field, or rather garden, which was principally devoted to watermelons, which seemed the principal article on the Mennonite bill of fare.

The site of the villages seemed selected with care, each standing on such slight ridges and elevations as the prairie afforded. It was summer in Kansas, and of course the scene was naturally beautiful;



but the scattered or collected Mennonite houses, with their bare walls of sods or boards, amid patches of broken prairie, did not at all add to the charm of the scene. The people were like their houses, useful but ugly. They had not yet got over the effect of their long ocean voyage or their life in the huddled emigrant quarters at Topeka, where they acquired a reputation for uncleanness which they were far from deserving. Still there was an appearance of resolution and patience about them, taken with the fact that all, men, women and children, were at work, that argued well for the future. It was easy, if possessed of the slightest amount of imagination, to see these rude habitations transformed in time to the substantial brick houses surrounded by orchards, such as the people had owned when they lived on the banks of the Molotchna in far Russia. Of course, it was reasoned, they would remain villagers; they would cling to the customs they brought from Russia, and remain for generations a peculiar people. They would be industrious; they would acquire wealth; but they would remain destitute of any sense of beauty, rather sordid, unsocial, and to that extent undesirable settlers.

Hardly seven years have passed, and on Friday last, for the first time, the writer was enabled to carry into effect a long-cherished purpose to return and take another look at the Mennonites. It was intended to start from Newton in the morning, but a day fair as ever dawned in Eden was followed by a night of thunder, lightning, and rain, the rain continuing to fall all the following forenoon, with a chill wind from the north; but at noon one of those "transformation scenes" common in Kansas occurred. The sky began to clear, with a great band of blue in the north and west; the wind blew free, and by 2 o'clock we drove out over roads that you could almost walk in barefooted without soiling your feet. We were fortunate in our guide, Mr. Muntefering, of Newton, who had hunted all over the country, and had traversed it often transacting business on behalf of the railroad company with the Mennonites. The wheat waved a varying shade of green, shifting in its lines like sea-water; the prairie-chickens rose on whirring wing before the old hunting-dog who ran before the carriage; flocks of long-billed plover looked out of the grass; and the meadow-lark rehearsed a few notes of his never-finished song.

A great change had taken place in the country generally since my last visit. The then raw prairie was now, barring the fences, very

like Illinois. At last, after driving about ten miles, Mr. Muntefering announced the first Mennonite habitation, in what seemed the edge of a young forest, and I then learned what I had never before heard, or else had forgotten, that the Mennonites had abandoned the village system, and now lived "each man to himself." They tried the villages three years, but some confusion arose in regard to paying taxes, and beside, it is in the air, this desire for absolute personal and family independence; and so they went on their lands, keeping, however, as close together as the lay of the country would admit. Sometimes there are four houses to the quarter-section; sometimes four to the section. The grand divisions of New Alexanderwohl, Hoffnungsthal and Gnadenau still exist, but each group of farms has a name of its own, revealing a poetical tendency somewhere, as Greenfield, Flower Field, Field of Grace, Emma Vale, Vale of Hope, and so on. These are the German names freely translated. The old sod-houses (we believe the Mennonites never resorted to the dug-out) had given way to frame houses, sometimes painted white, with wooden window-shutters. The houses had no porches or other architectural adornments, and were uniform in appearance. I learned afterward that the houses were built by contract, one builder at Halstead erecting sixty-five houses in one neighborhood.

The most surprising thing about these places is the growth of the trees. I left bare prairie; I returned to find a score of miniature forests in sight from any point of view. The wheat and corn fields were unfenced, of course, but several acres around every house were set in hedges, orchards, lanes and alleys of trees—trees in lines, trees in groups, and trees all alone. In many cases the houses were hardly visible from the road, and in a few years will be entirely hidden in the cool shade. Where the houses were only a few hundred yards apart, as was frequently the case, a path ran from one to the other, between two lines of poplars or cottonwoods. A very common shrub was imported from Russia and called the wild olive, the flowers being very fragrant; but the all-prevailing growth was the mulberry, another Russian idea, which is used as a hedge, a fruit tree, for fuel, and as food for the silk-worm.

We wished to see a few specimen Mennonites and their homes, and called first on Jacob Schmidt, who showed us the silk-worms feeding in his best room. On tables and platforms a layer of mulberry twigs had been laid, and these were covered with thousands of worms, resembling the maple-worm. As fast as the leaves are eaten

fresh twigs are added. As the worms grow, more room is provided for them, and they finally eat mulberry brush by the wagon-load. Mr. Schmidt said the floor of his garret would soon be covered. It seemed strange that the gorgeous robes of beauty should begin with this blind, crawling green worm, gnawing ravenously at a leaf.

We went next to the house of Peter Schmidt. Had I been an artist I should have sketched Peter Schmidt, of Emmathal, as the typical prosperous Mennonite. He was a big man, on the shady side of forty. His face, round as the moon, was sunburned to a walnut brown. He was very wide fore and aft; he wore a vest that buttoned to his throat, a sort of brown blouse, and a pair of very roomy and very short breeches, while his bare feet were thrust into a sort of sandals very popular with the Mennonites. The notable feature of Peter's face was a very small mouth, which was slightly spread at times with a little smile, showing his white teeth, and quite out of proportion to his immense countenance. Peter knew scarcely any English, but conversed readily through Mr. Muntefering. He showed with pride his mulberry hedges. The plants are set out in three rows, which are cut down alternately. Peter had already cut down one row, and had a great pile of brush for firewood. The Mennonites relied at first on straw, and a mixture of straw and barnyard manure, which was dried and used for fuel, but now the wood is increasing on their lands. They have seldom or never indulged in the extravagance of coal. Another source of pride was the apricots. The seed was brought from Russia, and the trees bore plentifully last year, and the Mennonites, taking them to Newton as a lunch, were agreeably surprised by an offer of \$3 a bushel for them. Peter Schmidt showed all his arboreal treasures—apples, cherries, peaches, apricots, pears, all in bearing, where seven years ago the wind in passing found only the waving prairie grass. No wonder Peter Schmidt, of Emmathal, waxed fat and smiled. He started on the prairie with \$800; he now has a farm worth \$4,000. We went into the house, of course; the door of every Mennonite is open, and the proprietor showed up his silk-worms and his possessions generally. He exhibited his Russian oven, built in the partition walls so as to warm two or three rooms, and to which is attached also a sort of brick range for cooking purposes. This device cannot be explained without a diagram. It is perfectly efficient, and the smoke at last goes into a wide chimney which is used as the family smoke-house. A happy man was Peter Schmidt, and well satisfied with his adopted



country, for when I managed to mix enough German and English together to ask him how he liked America as compared with Russia, he answered in a deep voice, and with his little smile: "Besser." With a hearty good-bye to Peter Schmidt of Emmathal, we pursued our journey, passing many houses, hedges and orchards, and finally came to the home of Heinrich Richert of Blumenfeld, or Flower Field.

This place was of the more modern type. The house was a plain frame, of the American pattern, but the stable had a roof of thatch, on which the doves clung and cooed, as you see them in pictures. Not far away on either hand were two other houses, to which shaded alleys led. In one of them lived the oldest married daughter of the family. Leading up to the front door, the path was lined with hedges of mulberry, trimmed very low, and flat on top, as box hedges are trimmed; and there was also a large flower bed of intricate pattern, the property of the Misses Richert.

When Mr. Richert came in from the fields, his bright eye, his square jaw, and the way he stood on his legs, showed that he was accustomed to authority. He had, in fact, been a schoolmaster in Russia, and in America occasionally exercises his gifts as a preacher. In the sitting-room, which had no carpet, but a pine floor which fairly shone, was a bookcase set in the wall and filled with books, which usually are not very common in Mennonite houses. They were all sober-colored volumes, commentaries on the Scriptures, and works on horse-doctoring. Madame Richert, a very pleasant woman, with, it may be remarked, a very pretty and small hand, gave the history of the older books, which were brought from Prussia, where her husband was born, but she herself was born in southern Russia, as were the thirteen young Richerts.

It was decided to accept the hospitality of these good people, and the mother and daughters got supper—and such a supper! such bread and butter and preserves; and everything, nearly, on the bill of fare was the product of this six-year-old farm. At table the conversation turned on the mode of living in Russia. From Mr. Richert's description the Mennonites lived much better than most working-people in Europe. They had Brazilian coffee which came by way of Hamburg, and tea which came overland from China; then they had fish, both fresh-water fish and fish from the Sea of Azof. He said the mode of serving food had been changed somewhat since the Mennonites had migrated to this country.

After supper, Mr. Richert, his son, and the visitors, had a long

talk about Russia. The treatment accorded the Mennonites by the Russian Government, up to 1871, was all that could be desired. The agreements made in the days of the Empress Catherine, what Mr. Richert called the "privilegium," were faithfully kept. The Mennonites did not own the lands, but leased them on the condition of cultivating them; the improvements were their own. The Mennonites had, in fact, very little to do with the Imperial Government; each of the fifty villages had its burgomaster, and a chief burgomaster was elected by the people. The Government transacted its business with the Mennonites through a council consisting of three Russian officials, and these performed their duty honestly—a rare thing in Russia. The Mennonites were industrious, peaceable and loyal; a Mennonite was the richest man in the Crimea, and one of the wealthiest in Russia. Everything went well until the Government, in 1871, announced its intention of enforcing a universal conscription. Against this the Mennonites protested. Ten years was given them to yield or leave. Thousands left. In 1881 the Government revoked the "privilegium," compelled the remaining Mennonites to take lands in severalty, and began to introduce the Russian language into the Mennonite schools. Russia's loss is our gain.

At breakfast the conversation turned on the wonderful success of the Mennonites with all kinds of trees, quite excelling anything known by Americans, with all their low-spirited horticultural societies. Herr Richert remarked that one thing that helped the trees was "plowing the dew under." This is one of the secrets of Mennonite success—they "plow the dew under" in the morning, and do not stop plowing till the dew falls at evening.

The history of Herr Richert was that of all the Mennonites we talked with. He had come to this country with \$1,000; at the end of the second year he was \$1,300 in debt, but had lifted the load and was now the possessor of a fine farm. The Mennonites, we may say, bought their lands in alternate sections of the railroad company, and in most cases bought the intervening sections of individual owners. They have been prompt pay. Many of the Mennonites were very poor. To provide these with land, a large sum was borrowed from wealthy Mennonites in the East. The beneficiaries are now prosperous, and the money has been faithfully repaid. Besides this, a mission has been maintained in the Indian Territory, and a considerable sum has been recently forwarded to aid destitute brethren in Russia.

To continue our journey: our next stop was to call on a settler who wore a beard, a Cossack cap, and looked the Russian more than any other man we met. He took us into a room, to show us some Tartar lambskin coats, which was a perfect copy of a room in Russia; with its sanded floor, its wooden settees painted red and green, its huge carved chest studded with great brass-headed bolts, and its brass lock-plate, all scoured to perfect brightness. In a little cupboard was a shining store of brass and silver table-ware. It was like a visit to Molotchna.

At the humble dwelling of Johann Krause we witnessed the process of reeling raw silk. The work was done by Mrs. Krause, on a rude twister and reel of home construction. The cocoons were placed in a trough of boiling water, and the woman, with great dexterity, caught up the threads of light cocoons, twisting them into two threads and running these on the reel. The work required infinite patience, of which few Americans are possessed. The Mennonites carried on the silk-raising business in Russia with great success, and bid fair to make it a great interest here.

After leaving Johann Krause, we made few more halts, but drove for miles with many Mennonite houses in sight, and the most promising orchards and immense fields of the greenest wheat. I have never seen elsewhere such a picture of agricultural prosperity.

If anyone has not yet made up his mind as to the possibilities of Kansas agriculture, I recommend a visit to the Mennonite settlements. It is not difficult of accomplishment, as the points I visited in Harvey, McPherson and Marion counties can be reached by a few miles drive from Newton or Halstead, on the main line of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, or from Canton, Hillsboro and other stations on the Marion & McPherson branch.

It is a matter, I regret to say, of uncertainty, whether the work begun by these Mennonite settlers will be completed. If the sons and grandsons of Peter Schmidt, of Emmathal, and Heinrich Richert, of Blumenfeld, will walk in the ways of those worthy men, the result will be something like fairyland—the fairies being, however, substantial men, weighing about 185 pounds each. The orchards will bud and bloom, and amid them will stand the solid brick houses, like those of Russia, and the richest farmers of Kansas will dwell therein. But there is a danger that this will not come to pass. Jacob and David will go to work on the railroad, and let the plow take care of itself; and Susanna and Aganetha will go out to service in the



towns, and fall to wearing fine clothes and marrying American Gentiles; and the evil day may come when the descendant of the Mennonites of the old stock will be cushioning store-boxes, saving the Nation with his mouth, or even going about like a roaring lion, seeking a nomination for Congress. I wish I could believe it otherwise. I wish our atmosphere did not make us all so smart that we cannot enjoy good health. Were it not for that accursed vanity and restlessness which is our heritage, I could indulge in a vision of the future—of a peaceful, quiet, wealthy people, undisturbed by the throes of speculation or politics, dwelling in great content under the vines and mulberry trees which their fathers planted in the grassy, wind-swept wilderness.

From *Kansas Miscellanies*, Topeka: Kansas Publishing House, 1889.

## *At Kawsmouth Station*

by HENRY KING

[Henry King, a native of Ohio, came to Kansas following the Civil War, in which he had been a captain, and was associated with Topeka newspapers for more than a decade. During these years he wrote local-color short-stories for the leading American magazines. In the 1880's he left Kansas for the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, which he edited for many years.]

"FROM INDIANA, did you say? My dear sir, you have my warmest sympathy."

He grasped my friend's hand with a cordial grip, and there was a persuasive, proselyting look in his face as he continued:—

"I used to live in Hoosierdom, and I know how it is myself, so to speak. You're going to Kansas, of course. Correct, sir, correct. Let me congratulate you. That's Kansas, just across the river there."

We were at the Kawsmouth railway station, waiting for a train for Topeka, and this chance acquaintance was like a whiff of fresh air to us, in the sultry strangeness of the place. He had an assuring countenance, slightly abated by an equivocal little twitching at the corners of the mouth; his bearing was easily familiar without being offensive; and his voice had in it something of the sparkle of the April sunshine that was making gold of the cracked and dingy station window. Moreover, he was quite intelligent in his way, and

uniquely original at times; and if he presumed upon our credulity, as I fear he did to some extent, it was done so adroitly and so graciously that no chance was left for detection.

"You'll like Kansas," he went on; "it's the very perfection of prairie country—not flat, nor boggy, but gently swelling, with rich valleys, and sloping everywhere. Eden sloped, you remember—'beautiful as the garden of the angels upon the slopes in Eden.' And the climate is simply celestial, if I may be allowed the word. Do you know, the average temperature of Kansas at the present day is nearly the same that Greece enjoyed when she was at the pinnacle of her greatness? Fact, gentlemen, sure's my name's Markley."

So saying, he took from his pocket a roll of papers, some printed and some written; and, leaving my friend to the study of what I took to be unassailable proofs of "the glory that was Greece" in the weather of Kansas, I turned my own attention to the young man who had been furtively passing back and forth in front of us as we talked, and who now stood gazing out through the dusty east window, a few steps away, with his elbow against the wall and his hand to his cheek—silent, listening, and absorbed.

He was a wholesome, honest-looking fellow, this young man, with frank blue eyes and the limbs of a gladiator. Evidently he was unused to the glossy black clothes he wore, for he wriggled about in them now and then as if with a haunting sense of their illogicalness; and in various noticeable ways he betrayed that confessing flutter of the heart which marks a man at once for a lover thinking of his mistress, or a criminal apprehensive of pursuing officers—it is often hard to tell which, the two are so much alike. But he did not leave me long in doubt on this point, for as I walked near him he faced about, and said, pleasantly, in answer to a question concerning his destination—

"I'm not going anywhere—that is, on the cars. I'm waiting for a young woman. She's to be here this morning, and I'm mightily afraid she's got left at St. Louis. She had to change cars there, coming from Macoupin County, Illinois. One train's in from St. Louis, you know—the one you came on—and she wasn't on that. There's another one due at 10:30 though. I reckon she'll be on that; but I don't feel easy about it at all."

He went to the door, and looked eagerly out along the railroad track eastward and then, returning, he added—

"We're to be married tonight, that's the truth of it; and we've

fifteen miles to ride into the country after she comes. It would be too bad if we didn't get there in time, with the license bought, and the preacher all ready, and the folks waiting and notioning about us. It would take us down so, you know. Is it much trouble for a woman to change cars by herself at St. Louis?"

"Not much," I assured him. "No doubt her ticket was over the other road, and she'll be here, all right, when the train gets in."

"Yes," he replied, in a dubious tone, "if she didn't get left, or if there hasn't been an accident on the way. It's foolish, I suppose, but do you know I can't help being shaky about it? And the nearer the time comes for the train, the shakier I feel; I do, really. Things are so uncertain, you know, 'specially railroads;" and he tried to laugh, but it was a hollow mockery.

Glancing towards the man Markley, I saw that he had spread out before him various documents, full of queer parallel lines and plentifully sprinkled with figures, from which he was interpreting to my friend, "Mr. Wabash," as he had named him, the marvelous growth of Kansas—"a growth which nobody would credit," he remarked, "were it not for the records, which I have here in black and white.

"The population of Kansas," he went on to say, "grew from one hundred thousand in 1860 to over three hundred and sixty thousand in 1870, a gain of nearly two hundred and forty per cent in ten years, against an average increase of less than twenty-two percent in the whole country, and more than four fifths of it came in the latter five of those ten years. It doesn't seem possible, does it? And now, in 1878, the population is certainly three fourths of a million, at least. More than doubled, you see, since 1870."

He paused a minute, in an exultant way; and then, adjusting his documents, resumed:—

"There are now over five million acres of cultivated land in the state. More than three million of it was raw prairie eight years ago; and in 1860 less than half a million acres had been 'broken'. And then, you must remember, the war had to be fought meantime, and Kansas was in the red-hot of it all the while. You may have forgotten that at one time she had twenty thousand men in the army out of a voting population of less than twenty-two thousand, and she actually gave more lives to the Union, in proportion to the number of troops engaged, than any other state."

These were indeed striking figures, we readily agreed; and I



sought, with the best intentions in the world, to win the young man waiting for his sweetheart to an interested notice of them. But the effort was provokingly futile. He was not looking for land. He had a home—in Kansas, too. He was telling the pale little lady in black alpaca, who sat near him, all about it: how he had preëmpted it five years before, and paid for it with two years' crops, and built a snug house of three rooms and 'a beauty of a buttery;' and how the front yard was sodded, and evergreens put out, and wisterias planted by the south porch. He was telling her, also, of the young woman who was to be queen of all this, and who was coming that morning to claim her crown, "if she hadn't got left, or the cars didn't run off the track, or something else didn't happen to her.

"Maybe you saw her at St. Louis. Did you notice a young woman there in a drab gown cut goring, and a sleeveless jacket, and a brown hat with two red roses and a bunch of wheat-heads on it—artificial, you know? That's the way she wrote me she was going to dress."

"A smallish young woman, with large hazel eyes?" asked the little lady in alpaca.

"Yes, yes," he replied, quickly and fondly.

"I did see such a person looking among the baggage," returned the little lady in alpaca. "I remarked her, I remember, on account of her elegant little feet. Are your young woman's feet very small and trim—about twos, I should say?"

He dropped his head, blushing, and said in a kind of hesitating under-tone—the big, bashful, simple-thoughted fellow—"I never noticed Clara's feet." No, indeed. For aught he knew, or cared, her drapery might have concealed the finny wonder of a mermaid. He worshiped her, that he knew; and she was unspeakably sacred to him; and of course he had never noticed her feet.

"She gave some one a letter to mail for her"—

"Yes," he interrupted, "that was for me. No, it couldn't have been for me, either; she wouldn't have sent me a letter when she was coming right on herself. No, it wasn't for me," and he appeared lost in a puzzle of thought. Then directly, he looked up again, and remarked, with quiet earnestness, "I don't think that was Clara."

"But to drop generalities, and come down to details," I heard Markley saying, "in these six counties with the red marks around them there were in 1870 only about a hundred settlers, and there was little of anything raised but the hair of casual immigrants who fell into the hands of the Indians. Now there are more than thirty-

five thousand people living there, and they have in cultivation over three hundred thousand acres of land, and own good houses, with books and pianos in them and the women folks wear pull-backs, and all that sort of thing." Just here, a jaded, pinched, and calico-clad old woman came in with a basket of apples, and this afforded Markley an excuse briefly to commend the rare advantages of Kansas as a fruit country. "You know we have already taken several first-class premiums in the pomological line; and I'm sure you saw our fruit display at the Centennial Exhibition—everybody saw it. And we haven't hardly begun yet. Wait a few years, and we'll astound you; it's a mere question of time." Then he purchased a half dozen of the old woman's apples—carefully choosing the larger ones, I could see—and divided them among his auditors; and he said to her very kindly, as she made change for him, "My good woman, you ought to go out into Kansas, to a higher, drier latitude; you look aguish."

"Thank you," she answered, "I'm as well as common. It's kind o' warm, and I'm a little down-hearted like; that's all, I guess."

"Speaking of ague," Markley went on, without further notice of the shrinking old apple-woman—"speaking of ague, I don't see how anybody can stay where it is, when it's so easy to go to Kansas."

"But you have ague in Kansas, the same as in every new country, don't you?" inquired Mr. Wabash.

"Only as it is brought in, temporarily, from other states," Markley politely responded. "It is not indigenous. We have no malaria. Our atmosphere is rich in ozone; and ozone is nature's own purifier. Homer mentions it in the Odyssey, you recollect, where he speaks of the atmosphere being 'quite full of sulphurous odor.' That's ozone."

"I presume the atmosphere of the infernal region is also 'quite full of sulphurous odor,'—or ozone," said Mr. Wabash, with a chuckle.

"Yes, I suppose so," Markley retorted, promptly; "put there, no doubt, to tantalize the fellows with suggestions of Kansas. 'Sorrow's crown of sorrow,' you know, 'is remembering happier things.' But as I was about to say, ozone dispels malaria, and keeps the climate free from bilious conditions. Besides, the ague is really a matter of morals rather than of physics, you understand." But we did not so understand it, and he therefore graciously proceeded to enlarge upon the statement for our benefit. "The ague always hovers about low, flat lands, where the soil is thin and jaundiced-looking, and where

the inhabitants go on voting for General Jackson for president. Take those quinine river-bottoms in some of the Western States,—I shan't call names,—where the men gather at the saw-mill every Sunday to pitch horseshoes and shoot at a mark; there's where you'll find ague every time. Then move out on the high, open lands, where they have Sabbath-schools and debating societies and collars to their shirts, and you'll see very little of it, usually none at all; the sickness there, when they have any, runs in the nervous way." Mr. Wabash laughed good-humoredly, and ventured some light remark about finding out more the longer we live; but Markley kept on in a solemn and impressive manner, as if charged with a special mission on the ague question: "It's considerably due to our school system, our free press, and our numerous churches, I tell you,—added to the abundant ozone,—that we are so little bothered with the thing in Kansas. We have four million dollars' worth of school houses, and nearly two hundred newspapers, and churches till you can't rest. There's no foot-hold for the ague among such things,—and a sky full of ozone hanging over them. It's very much a matter of civilization, this ague business. It's the difference between the sallow squirrel hunter, with his rifle on his shoulder and a gaunt hound at his heels, and the clear-complexioned, grammar-respecting man of the new era, with books and papers on the table and a canary-bird swinging in the window. They had no ague in Athens, you may be sure; they have none in Boston—to speak of."

These notions were so novel, and presented so earnestly, that everybody in the room was obliged to listen. Even the young man waiting for his sweetheart forgot himself a few moments, and gave surprised heed. Only for a few moments, however. Then he took up his dropped conversation again with the little lady in alpaca, who seemed to be humoring his worship of the coming wife as if it had been a religion,—and who shall say it was not?

"This is Clara's profile," he said timidly, reaching out a little morocco picture-case. "I don't want to brag about her, but, honestly, I think she's awful nice."

"It's a real sweet face," remarked the little lady in alpaca.

"I'll never quit wondering how it came about," he continued. "I haven't the least idea what makes her like me; I know I ain't good enough for her. She does like me, though. Her leaving a good home and coming so far, all alone, to marry me is enough itself to make that certain. I'd ought to have gone after, I know; and I offered



to, but she said it wasn't any use to go to that expense. I do wish I had gone as far as St. Louis to meet her, though. But I reckon she'll surely be here on the other train. One train's in from St. Louis, and she didn't come on that. I suppose it's silly to borrow trouble over it, but I can't help feeling shaky about her, to save my life. If anything *should* have happened to her,—

"Perhaps she's given you the grand bounce," Markley suggested, with a teasing pretense of alarm.

The young man drew himself up as if his very existence had been challenged. The color came and went in his cheeks, and his lips were set in rigid scorn.

"Bounce nothin'!" he said, haughtily, and walked away.

"You'll notice," Markley made haste to urge, "that the average yield of corn per acre in Kansas last year exceeded that of any other State. But we don't want to make Kansas a corn State. We have a higher ambition. Our bright, particular thing is wheat. Last year we raised more of it to the acre than any State between us and the Alleghenies. And we've only just started. When we get to working to our full capacity, making wheat our main crop and corn a mere side issue, Kansas will be the rainbow of the Union."

Wabash and I both laughed, in spite of ourselves; and Markley himself let his face relax into a broad smile as he proceeded:—

"You don't see the point, do you? Very well," recovering his earnestness of manner; "what constitutes a State? Men,—high-minded, tough-sinewed men. And what makes such men? Wheat bread, gentlemen,—wheat bread. Corn does for 'roughness,' so to speak,—hogs thrive on it,—but it takes wheat to win in the long run. Now, I have no doubt that the North finally triumphed in the rebellion because her soldiers lived on wheat bread. The soldiers of the South were brave enough, but they were loose-jointed, and lacking in that finer, conquering strength of muscle and brain that comes from wheat; they lived on corn bread, sometimes on the raw corn, you see. Granting all other things to have been equal, this difference in diet alone was sufficient to turn the scale. Mind what I tell you: there's destiny in wheat. And look what an abundance of it we'll be able to produce a few years from now! There are over forty-seven million acres of land yet unused in Kansas,—first-class wheat land, all of it. A perfect empire! Now, taking the present average,—about fifteen bushels to the acre,—look how many bushels

this land will yield in the aggregate every year, when it all comes to be cultivated."

He sharpened his pencil to make the calculation; but, much to his chagrin, he had to defer it, for a locomotive whistle uttered its warning scream down under the river-bluff, and a quivering, widening belt of steam, glittering in the sunlight, shot up like a comet's tail among the branches of the trees. The station waiting-room was vacated with a rush. The St. Louis train was coming.

It was curious to watch the young man waiting for his sweetheart. He stood apart from the rest of us, at the extreme eastern end of the station platform, oblivious of everything but the slowly-approaching locomotive. Very likely the world stood still, in his tense thoughts, while that great puffing, hoarse-throated thing drew itself towards him over the creaking rails; for was not she coming with it, to make life a long, glad song to him? It was not strictly a happy look he had, however. It seemed rather to indicate that sharp sense of joy which has a touch of fear in it, and so becomes in part a pain. And when, at length, the train reached the platform and stopped, we noticed that he did not hasten to the cars, as we had supposed he would, but walked doubtfully along the outer edge of the crowd of alighting passengers, with a strange stare in his countenance. At last, though, she stepped out of the rear coach, and stood there with her head slightly inclined, and smiling. We all knew her at a glance. And the next moment he was by her side, and she had put her hand in his, and they were both blushing to their very ears.

"Why, Seth!" she said.

"How d'y' do, Clara!"

That was all there was of it, and it was disappointing,—to the spectators, I mean. No doubt the parties in interest were satisfied with it, however; and how could we know what warmer greetings they would exchange in the shade of their road through yonder forest?

They had a little whispered consultation that we did not hear, but we could surmise that it related to her trunk; for presently they sought it out and claimed it, and she opened it and took from it certain neatly-folded and mysterious articles, which she put together in a little bundle and pinned what looked to be an apron around them. Then the trunk was handed over to the station-agent, apparently to be kept until sent for, and they walked briskly across

the zigzag complexity of railway tracks to where the horses were impatiently waiting to carry them to the wedding.

We stood gazing after them from the station, as they mounted their horses and rode up the green and inviting valley,—he on the high-stepping bay with the flowing mane, and she on the brisk, sidling chestnut sorrel, that wore the new saddle, and the bridle gaudy with blue and white ribbons. Behind them and about them was the bland April sunshine; in front of them, just over the river, in the shadow of the bluff, glowed the pink miracle of the peach-blossoms. Somehow the scene recalled to my mind Scott's young Lochinvar "from out of the west," and the fair Ellen of Netherby Hall; and I found myself repeating, under my breath,—“They'll have fleet steeds that follow, quoth young Lochinvar.”

A vein of similar fancy must have reached the heart of my friend Wabash, too; for as the happy couple crossed the river-bridge, and sped past the pink orchard, and cantered up the bluff and in among the concealing foliage, he observed, with an admirable smile,—

“It looks like the last chapter of some old romance!”

“Heaven bless 'em!” said Markley.

The bell sounded, and we hastened aboard the train. A few minutes later we had turned our backs on Kawsmouth, and set our expectant faces towards the land of ozone and wheat,—the verdurous, ageless slopes and the odors that Homer sang,—the land where the sun is in league with fate, and the fruits of the soil are for the healing of the nation.

From the *Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1879.

## *Emigrant Life in Kansas*

by PERCY G. EBBUTT

[Percy Ebbutt came to Kansas from his native England at the age of ten. He remained in Kansas six years, and after his return to England published a book relating his experiences for the benefit of English people who wanted to know about life on the prairies in the United States.]

ON LORD MAYOR'S DAY, the 9th of November, 1870, there started from my native town of Blanxton, in the south of England, a party of six persons, bound as emigrants for the far west of America. It



consisted of my father, brother, three young men, and myself. My father had been an upholsterer, doing a very good business, but having always had a great wish to go abroad, thought it, I suppose, a good opportunity, when his place was burned down in June of the same year; Harry Parker had been a shorthand clerk on the London and North Western Railway, but for some time past had been in my father's office; Walter Woods was a printer by trade, but had also studied engineering a little; Will Humphrey was the son of a Sussex farmer, and consequently the most useful man of the bunch, as we were going farming and cattle-raising; while my brother Jack and I were schoolboys of the tender ages of twelve and ten respectively.

With the exception of Humphrey, none of us knew anything whatever of farming; I might say that we scarcely knew a plough from a harrow (I remember one of our party speaking very enthusiastically of *churning* cheese), and we had certainly never done a day's work on a farm . . . . We took with us about enough luggage to stock a colony, all packed in ten great cases, four feet long by two feet six square, painted of a bright vermilion colour, and with our names and destination on. The latter was "Junction City, Kansas."

The contents of these cases were of a varied nature, and comprised tools, clothing, arms, and ammunition, besides tea, cocoa, etc., etc. Many of the things were quite useless we afterwards found, and a great number we could have bought in America quite as cheaply as in England. Among the totally useless articles was a hand corn-mill with a great flywheel of five feet in diameter, which, of course, required a larger box. The guns, however, were packed in with this, and we had quite a good armoury . . . .

Upon our arrival at Junction we put up at the Empire Hotel, and had a jolly time; for while the elder members of the party were looking about for land and shooting all the game they could, we two boys amused ourselves with sleigh-riding down the Bluffs, as the hills on the other side of the Smoky River were called, and with making divers excursions into the surrounding country. Sometimes we went to see the stone quarries a little way out of town, where very fine building material is obtained. Then again we used to watch the men sawing and pulling ice out of the river ready for packing away for summer. One day we went down to the slaughter-house, and we got a couple of cow's horns, which we made to blow,

by sawing the ends off and cutting a small hole, and then we made the hills re-echo with the music.

At that time Junction was quite a small place, with a very few inhabitants, but was growing rapidly. It is situated on rather high land at the junction of the Smoky and Republican Rivers, whence its name. It is also now the junction of two railways, the Kansas Pacific, and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas. Three miles distant, on a bluff overhanging the Kansas River, stands Fort Riley, a garrison for light cavalry and artillery, as a guard against Indians. These are getting rather scarce, however, by this time, as the country is too thickly settled by whites. One day, when Jack and I were out on one of our expeditions, we met three Indians, and, as they were the first that we had seen, we were rather scared. We were a long way off, and so we hid in some bushes. Little stupids! We might have saved ourselves the trouble, for they probably saw us long before we saw them. But they passed by without molesting us. While we were staying at Junction we had some very cold weather, and one night three soldiers going home drunk to Fort Riley were frozen to death. . . .

Game was very plentiful, and we used to bring home lots for the landlady at the Empire Hotel, to make "sparing-pie" as she called it. . . .

One day we saw "Wild Bill," a noted desperado or "border ruffian," shooting quails in a stable yard in the city (they were so plentiful and tame). Wild Bill was a fine-looking fellow, with long curly hair hanging down his back, and was dressed in a rather dandified fashion. He was said to have twenty-seven nicks cut on the handle of his revolver, each signifying a man whose life had been taken by him. And yet he walked the streets as free as any man, and perhaps with more security than a less desperate criminal would, for he would have to be a plucky man to arrest "Wild Bill." He was afterwards actually elected "sheriff" of Wichita, a town down south, which was frequented by Texas "cow-boys," and he was killed at last in some saloon brawl. . . .

After we had stayed in Junction for six weeks we removed to Parkersville, a town some twenty-five miles distant, near where our party had taken land. Here we lived for a fortnight at a boarding-house, spending our time pretty much as before. The town, which at that time consisted of about nineteen houses, a drug store, a post-office, and a general store, is situated in Morris county, on the river

Neosho, sometimes called "Noshow," as in summer it occasionally goes dry. The drug store was the rendezvous for all the farmers coming to town, for apart from its being also the post-office, it was the only place where "medicine" could be obtained. There was no regular saloon or drinking bar in the place, but every one that wanted a drink went to the drug store, and got a little whiskey "medicinally." His worship, the Mayor, ran the place, and I guess he did a good business. Another much frequented place was the general store, run by Captain Brown; we had about the usual number of captains in that town,—about three out of every five persons. Here the loafers congregated in good force, sitting round the roaring, red-hot stove, with their heels high up, and chewing tobacco, talking politics, whittling sticks, and eating crackers and cheese. Captain Brown was a man of considerable importance,—anyhow in his own eyes,—but I guess my father kinder [*sic*] took the starch out of him once. Captain Brown offered him two fingers to shake, and my father immediately hooked into them with one—the little one. The next time they met it was a whole-handed job.

One man staying at the boarding-house was a cattle dealer, and had a number of wild Texas animals wintering near at hand. We went to see them at the corral, and found several so weak that they could not stand. We assisted some to their feet only to get ourselves run after by the ungrateful brutes until they tumbled down again. Cattle frequently get like that during the cold winter, especially those from the south for the first time. My father bought one or two cows in the neighborhood ready for when we should go up on the prairie, but not having had any experience in such matters, I am afraid he was rather taken in. He also bought a couple of town lots as a speculation in case the town took to growing. Some money belonging to Jack and me he invested for us in a piece of timber land on the river, so that when up on the prairie, we might have some wood to burn or for fences, and not be entirely dependent upon "jay-hawking," which is the term for stealing wood off Government land. . . .

The country around had all been surveyed by Government previous to our settling, and divided into square miles, sections, they are called, marked with a stone set in the ground. They may then be cut up easily into the required lots—viz., eighty acres for an ordinary settler, and one hundred and sixty for any man who has been a soldier in the Federal Army. . . .



When we moved up we were the only settlers on the prairie for some miles round, but a few months afterwards several emigrants took land. I will introduce you to a few of them.

About the first was one who was soon known by the name of "Prairie" Wilson, having a farm on the highest land in the district. He was very poor when he first started, having only a wife, one child, and his bedclothes, but by dint of hard work he soon had a comfortable place.

Another family was that of George Dyson, who settled about a mile from our house. They were of rather a better class than some of the emigrants who followed.

Mrs. Dyson had been married before, at the mature age of thirteen years, and had been left a widow with two children at nineteen. The first husband was a great friend of Mr. Dyson's, and when he died he asked him to look after his wife and children, and he did so in the most practical way. . . .

Living near them was old Anthony Prauss, a Dutchman, who could speak about twelve words in English; but he was a decent old chap, and we got along very well with him.

Another of our neighbors was a man called "Dutch Jake." He had a farm a few miles from us, and professedly lived with his "sister," though there was little doubt but that she was his wife. It was simply a trick to get more land, as an unmarried woman can have eighty acres of Government land free, the same as a man, but a married woman cannot. A widow may also take a piece of land, and, in fact, any one who is the head of a family, if even a boy or girl under age. There is no charge for land, except a nominal fee of about fourteen dollars. . . .

There were several Swedish families round about, who seemed good, thrifty people. One peculiar characteristic of them seemed to be that they could nearly all work well in stone; and, as a consequence, they all erected good, solid-built stone houses.

They seemed to be very hardy and industrious. I knew one, Olaf Swainson, who was one day quarrying rock, and cut one of his fingers clean off. He made very little fuss about it, but picked it up, rolled it in some grass, and put it in his pocket, and then went to the house to tie up his hand.

There were the Quinns, a large family of Irish-Americans, who also arrived with nothing save one or two horses and a few tools;

but as there were several boys large enough to work, they soon got along swimmingly. We became acquainted in a very short time, and used to go over there very frequently. They broke some prairie and built a house with the sods, with a few boards for the roof, and then set to work in earnest with the crops, and they were soon able to live on the products of the farm and garden. As they had no cows we supplied them with milk, which they much wanted, there being several small children among them; and so they undertook to do our washing in exchange for half-a-gallon of milk a day. . . .

Once in the wintertime when we two boys were at Quinn's, we had a lively time with a prairie fire. An old Swede, living a little way north of their place, had accidentally set fire to the grass, and there was a most terrific north wind blowing, the fire was down upon us in a moment. Old Andy Johnson came in front of it, scorching himself whilst vainly endeavoring to check the progress of the flames by beating them with his coat. He arrived breathless and hatless just as the fire was coming over the crest of the hill in front of the house. We all ran out immediately, and set to work to "back fire" from the stables, and were only just in time to save the whole place from destruction, by burning a sufficiently wide piece of grass off, and thus stopping the rush of fire.

It was a bitterly cold day, and while working right amongst fire, moving a wagon out of the way, Jack got his hands frozen rather badly. Mrs. Quinn doctored him up though, and rubbed his hands with kerosene oil, etc., and they soon got well, without losing any fingers.

In a few minutes after the first alarm the fire passed right by, and the whole face of the country was changed from a dry dead brown to an intense black, and ashes were blowing about in the clouds. For a long time we could trace the progress of the fire by a thick column of smoke, and at night there was a red glow in the sky, showing that it was still burning away. . . .

Some few miles from us lived the Garretts, an English family. They had not been used to farming, and did not succeed particularly well. Mrs. Garrett did not get along in what is usually considered the woman's department at all. She was not much of a cook, and as to milking a cow—"Oh! I can't, it feels so nasty!" said she at her first trial, and so poor old Garrett always had that job.

Near them lived a family named Samaurez, of Spanish descent.

They rather considered themselves "some pumpkins," and their status may be summed up in the words of one of the Quinn boys. "They've got two kinds of sugar, and don't they just look at yer if you put white sugar in your coffee, or yaller sugar in your teal!"

From *Emigrant Life in Kansas*, London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1886.



## IV.

# Men against the Frontier

*The life of the Kansas pioneer was a constant struggle for survival—a struggle of man against man and man against nature. It continued for half a century, for the Kansas frontier was fifty years moving across the state; and long after the eastern half of Kansas was a settled community, the peoples of western Kansas were undergoing the hardships of pioneer life. Drouths, floods, blizzards, grasshoppers, booms, and Indians—all exacted a fearful toll which was largely the result of men's living in an environment where they had little means of protecting themselves. The worst drouth, in 1859-60, was the first one; a third of the people left the state and another third did not have money enough to get away. Then followed the frontier Indian warfare, when over a five-year period a thousand settlers lost their lives, the line of settlements was pushed eastward, and all travel over the overland trails ceased. But despite Indians and depredations of nature, Kansas nurtured a full-grown boom, which ended in 1887 with a first-class bust. In three or four years the East was again thinking about Kansas.*

### *The Drouth of 1860*

by J. N. HOLLOWAY

[J. N. Holloway, a native of Indiana, came to Kansas in 1866 and taught school at Ottawa, but soon moved to Topeka, where he wrote the first history of the state following its admission to the Union. To bring out the history, he spent all his savings, mortgaged his property, and borrowed money from relatives and friends. Following publication he traveled over eastern Kansas by horse and buggy—camping out, sleeping in the buggy, and doing his own cooking—selling the history and appointing agents. Returning to the East, he again found the sale disappointing, taught school, practiced law, and farmed in order to discharge the debt he had incurred.]

THE YEAR OF 1860 is remarkable for an unprecedented drouth, which occasioned what is generally termed the "Kansas famine." The facts in the case are briefly stated. From the 19th of June, 1859, to November, 1860, there was not a shower of rain fell at any one time, to wet the earth two inches in depth. During the intervening

winter, there were two slight snows, neither of which concealed the ground from view. The roads were never muddy, during the whole period, and during the summer, the ground would break open in great cracks, embarrassing the rolling of wagons, while the winds blew with a burning and parching sirocco's blast from the south, and with the hot beams of an unclouded sun, parched the soil and burned up vegetation.

Such was the frightful character of the drouth, which it becomes faithful history to record. The consequence was, that the crops in the Territory were almost an entire failure. Fall wheat, induced by the snow and frost of winter, shot forth in the spring, but withered and died when that moisture was exhausted. Spring wheat, of which there was little sown, fared no better. Out of 4,000 acres of good land sown in Shawnee county, not five hundred bushels were raised—less than one-eighth of a bushel to the acre. Other counties did some better, but most of them did not harvest a bushel. Esculent vegetables were a perfect failure everywhere; not a cabbage, bean, radish, onion or anything of the kind was raised. Potatoes and turnips—the next things to the staff of life—were likewise failures. From the carefully prepared statistics of Shawnee county, it is shown that two hundred and seventy-nine acres of potatoes were planted, and only ten bushels raised; seventy-six acres of beans produced but ten bushels; from two hundred and twenty-four acres of Hungarian grass, only ten tons were mowed; while buckwheat, turnips and garden vegetables were utter failures. Corn fared some better. The low bottom lands, where properly tilled, averaged almost one-third of a crop, and the high lands and ridges produced no grain whatever—only dry fodder. . . .

The prairie grass furnished the chief support of the people. It grew and flourished nicely until about the middle of June or the 1st of July, when it parched and died on all the uplands. Along the ravines and creeks, and in the "pockets" it remained green still later, furnishing hay for winter. The wild grass, though not so abundant as usual, still was of such a superior quality that it kept the cattle fat all summer and fall. The sap having dried up, left it very nutritive, and stock ate it with as much relish as though it had been green. Some difficulty in places was experienced in procuring hay, there being no grass long enough to mow, except in some of the low lands and along creeks and rivers. Farmers went in a few instances, as far as forty miles to procure hay for their

cattle. Stock, which would otherwise have famished, fed upon the spontaneous growth of grass on the prairies during the summer, fall and winter.

To add to the already distressed condition of the country, the wells, springs and brooks dried up. Very few held out during the year. Families on the prairies were compelled, in many instances, to haul their water several miles, and would even thus procure a very inferior quality. They had neglected to dig wells, depending on creeks and brooks for water, so that when these were dried up they were left destitute.

The drouth in some localities of Kansas was not as bad as above described. Along the Missouri River and in the north-eastern portion, a sufficient was raised to feed the population of that region. In the Kaw Valley, where properly tilled, the land yielded a two-thirds crop of corn. But elsewhere throughout the Territory the drouth was fully as alarming as we have shown above. . . .

But the people of this Territory were illy prepared for this universal dearth of crops. Their granaries were generally exhausted before the summer months arrived, at which time not one-half the farmers in Kansas had a bushel of corn on hand. It being a good price at the Border towns the fall previous, and the roads being excellent all winter they had sold in market all the surplus corn they supposed they would have after June set in, trusting to the grass from the prairies for feed. So with wheat; all those that had raised more than their own consumption would demand, had disposed of it at what they supposed was a good price, and appropriated the money to supply the wants of their families. By the fall of 1860 there was scarcely any corn or wheat in the Territory; not six thousand bushels of either in each county. . . .

The result was that thirty thousand settlers left the Territory and returned to their friends and to provision in the States. It looked at the time as though the whole country would be depopulated and left a barren and uninhabited waste. Claims, with their improvements, houses, fences, &c., were abandoned and stood dreary and alone upon the prairies. Long trains of covered wagons, drawn by lean horses, with woe-begone looking inmates, in mournful procession crossed the Border.

Thirty thousand more would have left, but they had no means with which to get away. They had not a sufficient amount of clothing and provisions to last them half the winter, and Famine, with all his



grim and ghastly features, stood sentinel at their doors. It was plain that they must perish from starvation, unless that Father who supplies the birds of the air with food would bring deliverance to their homes. They were the industrious poor of Kansas, who had come here to rear themselves homes upon the wide extended prairies by hard toil, and had no hope of supplies only what they gathered from the fields. They had no rich friends in the East to lend a helping hand, nothing on earth could meet their necessities but the Spirit of Benevolence.

The other forty thousand of the population in Kansas were in a condition to withstand the famine, but could do nothing towards alleviating the wants of others. With the provision and clothing they had, and with that which they had money to procure, together with the assistance of friends from abroad, they could manage to live themselves.

The painful fact stared the people of Kansas in the face, that want and starvation were before them. There was no evading or overcoming it, notwithstanding its admission would militate against the character of the new and growing country. The alarming rumor reached the East, and at once touched the kind and sympathetic hearts of the numerous friends of Kansas. Thadyus Hyatt, of New York, who had always taken an active interest in Kansas, was the first to move in relief of the destitute. He came to the Territory himself, visited numerous counties, acquainted himself with the actual state of affairs, and gathered statistics. . . . Mr. Hyatt returned East, petitioned the President for assistance, in behalf of the destitute in Kansas, and published to the world his statistics and facts of personal observation, with an appeal for an immediate response for the relief of the sufferers.

The movement thus inaugurated, continued its operations until the spring of 1861, and contributed vastly towards the relief of the destitute, . . .

From *History of Kansas*, Lafayette, Indiana: James, Emmons & Co., 1868.

## *A Flood at Fort Hays*

by ELIZABETH B. CUSTER

[Elizabeth B. Custer was the wife of General George A. Custer. During the Indian warfare on the Kansas frontier following the Civil War, Gen-

eral Custer was assigned at one time to scout the stage route from Ft. Hays to Ft. McPherson. Mrs. Custer, who had been at Ft. Riley, joined her husband at Ft. Hays, and while he was absent at Ft. McPherson the flood occurred whose story she here relates.]

ONE NIGHT we had retired, and were trying to believe that the thunder was but one of those peculiar menacing volleys of cloud-artillery that sometimes passed over harmlessly; but we could not sleep, the roar and roll of thunder was so alarming. There is no describing lightning on the Plains. While a storm lasts, there seems to be an incessant glare. To be sure, there is not the smallest flash that does not illumine the tent, and there is no way of hiding from the blinding light. In a letter written to my husband while the effect of the fright was still fresh on my mind, I told him "the heavens seemed to shower down fire upon the earth, and in one minute and a half we counted twenty-five distinct peals of thunder." There seemed to be nothing for us to do but to lie quaking and terrified under the covers. The tents of the officers were placed at some distance from ours intentionally, as it is impossible to speak low enough, under canvas, to avoid being heard, unless a certain space intervenes. It is the custom to allow a good deal of ground to intervene, if the guard is so posted as to command the approach to all the tents. The result was, that we dared not venture to try to reach a neighbor; we simply had to endure the situation, as no cry could be heard above the din of the constantly increasing storm. In the midst of this quaking and misery, the voice of some officers outside called to ask if we were afraid. Finding that the storm was advancing to a tornado, they had decided to return to us and render assistance if they could, or at least to quiet our fears. The very sound of their voices calmed us, and we dressed and went into the outer tent to admit them. The entrance had been made secure by leather straps and buckles that the General had the saddler put on; and in order to strengthen the tents against these hurricanes, which we had already learned were so violent and sudden, he had ordered poles at each corner sunk deep into the ground. These, being notched, had saplings laid across either side, and to these the tent-ropes were bound. We were thus seemingly secured between two barriers. He even went further in his precautions, and fastened a picket-rope, which is a small cable of itself, to either end of the ridge-pole, stretching it at the front and rear, and fastening it with an iron pin driven into the ground. As we opened two or three of the straps to admit

the officers and Eliza [the Custer maid], who always overcame every obstacle to get to me in danger, the wind drove in a sheet of rain upon us, and we found it difficult to strap the opening again. As for the guy-ropes and those that tied the tent at the sides, all this creaking, loosening cordage proved how little we could count upon its stability. The great tarpaulin, of the heaviest canvas made, which was spread over our larger tent and out in front for a porch, flapped wildly, lashing our poor little "rag house" as if in a fury of rage. Indeed, the whole canvas seemed as if it might have been a cambric handkerchief, for the manner in which it was wrenched and twisted above and on all sides of us. The tallow candle was only kept lighted by surrounding it with boxes to protect its feeble flame from the wind. The rain descended in such sheets, driven by the hurricane, that it even pressed in the tent-walls; and in spite of the trenches, that every good campaigner digs about the tent, we were almost inundated by the streams that entered under the lower edge of the walls.

The officers, finding we were sure to be drenched, began to fortify us for the night. They feared the tent would go down, and that the ridge-pole of a hospital-tent, being so much larger than that of a wall-tent, would do some fatal injury to us. They piled all the available furniture in a hollow square, leaving a little space for us. Fortunately, some one, coming down from the post a few days before, had observed that we had no table. There was no lumber at the post, and the next best thing was to send us a zinc-covered board which had first served for a stove; secondly, with the addition of rude supports, as our table, and now did duty in its third existence as a life-preserver; for the ground was softening with the moisture, and we could not protect our feet, except for the narrow platform on which we huddled. At last the booming of the thunder seemed to abate somewhat, though the wind still shrieked and roared over the wide plain, as it bore down upon our frail shelter. But the tent, though swaying and threatening to break from its moorings, had been true to us through what we supposed to be the worst of the tempest, and we began to put some confidence in the cordage and picket-pins. The officers decided to return to their tents, promising to come again should there be need, and we reluctantly permitted them to go. Eliza put down something on which we could step over the pools into the other tent, and we fell into bed, exhausted with



terror and excitement, hardly noticing how wet and cold we and the blankets were.

Hardly had we fallen into a doze, when the voice of the guard at the entrance called out to us to get up and make haste for our lives; the flood was already there! We were so agitated that it was difficult even to find the clothes that we had put under the pillow to keep them from further soaking, much more to get into them. It was then impossible to remain inside the tent. We crept through the opening, and, to our horror, the lightning revealed the creek—which we had last seen, the night before, a little rill in the bottom of the gully—now on a level with the high banks. The tops of good-sized trees, which fringed the stream, were barely visible, as the current swayed the branches in its onward sweep. The water had risen in that comparatively short time thirty-five feet, and was then creeping into the kitchen tent, which as usual, was pitched near the bank. I believe no one attempted to account for those terrific rises in the streams, except as partly due to water-spouts, which were common in the early days of Kansas. I have seen the General hold his watch in his hand after the bursting of a rain-cloud, and keep reckoning for the soldier who was measuring with a stick at the stream's bed, and for a time it recorded an inch a minute.

Of course the camp was instantly astir after the alarm of the guard. But the rise of the water is so insidious often, that a sentinel walking his beat a few yards away will sometimes be unconscious of it until the danger is upon the troops. The soldiers, our own man, detailed as striker, and Eliza, were not so "stampeded," as they expressed it, as to forget our property. Almost everything that we possessed in the world was there, much of our property being fortunately still boxed. I had come out to camp with a valise, but the wagon-train afterward brought most of our things, as we supposed we had left Fort Riley forever. The soldiers worked like beavers to get everything they could farther from the water, upon a little rise of ground at one side of our tents. Eliza, the coolest of all, took command, and we each carried what we could, forgetting the lightning in our excitement.

The officers who had come to us in the early part of the tempest now returned. They found their own camp unapproachable. The group of tents having been pitched on a bend in the crooked stream, which had the advantage of the circle of trees that edged the water, was now found to be in the worst possible locality, as the torrent

had swept over the narrow strip of earth and left the camp on a newly made island, perfectly inaccessible. The lives of the men and horses stranded on this little water-locked spot were in imminent peril. The officers believed us when we said we would do what we could to care for ourselves if they would go at once, as they had set out to do, and find succor for the soldiers. It was a boon to have something that it was necessary to do, which kept us from absolute abandonment to terror. We hardly dared look toward the rushing torrent; the agony of seeing the water steal nearer and nearer our tent was almost unendurable. As we made our way from the heap of household belongings, back and forth to the tent, carrying burdens that we could not even have lifted in calmer moments, the lightning became more vivid and the whole arc above us seemed aflame. We were aghast at what the brilliant light revealed. Between the bluffs that rose gradually from the stream, and the place where we were on its banks, a wide newly made river spread over land that had been perfectly dry, and, as far as any one knew, had never been inundated before. The water had overflowed the banks of the stream above us, and swept across the slight depression that intervened between our ground and the hills. We were left on that narrow neck of land, and the water on either side of us, seen in the lightning's glare, appeared like two boundless seas. The creek had broken over its banks and divided us from the post below, while the garrison found themselves on an island also, as the water took a new course down there, and cut them off from the bluffs. This was a misfortune to us, as we had so small a number of men and sorely needed what help the post could have offered.

While we ran hither and thither, startled at the shouts of the officers and the men as they called to one another, dreading some new terror, our hearts sinking with uncontrollable fright at the wild havoc the storm was making, the two dogs that the General valued, Turk, the bull-dog, and Rover, his favorite fox-hound, broke their chains and flew at each other's throat. Their warfare had been long and bloody, and they meant that night to end the contest. The ferocity of the bull-dog was not greater than that of the old hound. The soldiers sprang at them again and again to separate them. The fangs of each showed partly buried in the other's throat, but finally, one powerful man choked the bull-dog into relaxing his hold. The remnants of the gashed and bleeding contestants were again tied at a secure distance, and the soldiers renewed their work to prevent

the tents from falling. I remember that in one gale, especially furious, seventeen clung to the guy-rope in front and saved the canvas from downfall.

But, after all, something worse awaited us than all this fury of the elements and the dread of worse to come to ourselves; for the reality of the worst that can come to anyone was then before us without a warning. There rang out on the air, piercing our ears even in the uproar of the tempest, sounds that no one, once hearing, ever forgets. They were the despairing cries of drowning men. In an instant our danger was forgotten; but the officers and men were scattered along the stream beyond our call, and Eliza was now completely unnerved. We ran up and down the bank, wringing our hands, she calling to me, "Oh, Miss Libbie! what shall we do? What shall we do?" We tried to scream to those dark forms hurrying by us, that help might come farther down. Alas! the current grew more furious as the branch poured into the main stream, and we could distinguish, by the oft-repeated glare of the lightning, the men waving their arms imploringly as they were swept down with tree-trunks, masses of earth, and heaps of rubbish that the current was drifting by. We were helpless to attempt their rescue. There can be few moments in existence that hold such agonizing suffering as those where one is appealed to for life, and is powerless to give succor. I thought of the ropes about our tent, and ran to unwind one; but they were lashed to the poles, stiff with moisture, and tied with sailors' intricate knots. In a frenzy, I tugged at the fastenings, bruising my hands and tearing the nails. The guy-ropes were equally unavailable, for no knife we had could cut such a cable. . . .

Seven men were drowned near our tent, and their agonizing cries, when they were too far out in the current for us to throw our line, are sounds that will never be stilled. The men were from the Colonel's escort on the temporary island above us. The cavalrymen attempted, as the waters rose about them, to swim their horses to the other shore; but all were lost who plunged in, for the violence of the current made swimming an impossibility. A few negro soldiers belonging to the infantry were compelled to remain where they were, though the water stood three feet in some of the tents. When the violence of the storm had abated a little, one of the officers swam the narrowest part of the stream, and, taking a wagon-bed, made a ferry, so that with the help of soldiers that he had left behind holding one end of the rope he had taken over, the remaining soldiers



were rescued and brought down to our little strip of land. Alas! this narrowed and narrowed, until we all appeared to be doomed. The officers felt their helplessness when they realized that four women looked to them for protection. They thought over every imaginable plan. It was impossible to cross the inundated part of the plain, though their horses were saddled, with the thought that each one might swim with us through the shallowest of the water. They rode into this stretch of impassable prairie, but the water was too swift, even then, to render it anything but perilous. They decided that if the water continued to rise with the same rapidity we would be washed away, as we could not swim, nor had we strength to cling to anything. This determined them to resort to a plan that, happily, we knew nothing of until the danger was passed. We were to be strapped to the Gatling guns as an anchorage. These are, perhaps, the lightest of all artillery, but might have been heavy enough to resist the action of what current rose over our island. There would have been one chance in ten thousand of rescue under such circumstances, but I doubt if being pinioned there, watching the waves closing around us, would have been as merciful as permitting us to float off into a quicker death.

While the officers and men with us were working with all their might to save lives and property, the little post was beleaguered. The flood came so unexpectedly that the first known of it was the breaking in of the doors of the quarters. The poorly built, leaky, insecure adobe houses had been heretofore a protection, but the freshet filled them almost instantly with water. The quarters of the laundresses were especially endangered, being on even lower ground than the officers' houses. The women were hurried out in their night-dresses, clasping their crying children, while they ran to places pointed out by the officers, to await orders. Even then, one of our Seventh Cavalry officers, who happened to be temporarily at the garrison, clambered up to the roof of an adobe house to discover whether the women of his regiment were in peril. The same plan for rescue was adopted at the post that had been partly successful above. A ferry was improvised out of a wagon-bed, and into this were collected the women and children. The post was thus emptied in time to prevent loss of life. First the women, then the sick from the hospital, and finally the drunken men; for the hospital liquor was broken into, and it takes but a short time to make a soldier help-

lessly drunk. The Government property had to be temporarily abandoned, and a great deal was destroyed or swept away by the water. It was well that the camp women were inured to hardship, for the condition in which the cold, wet, frightened creatures landed, without any protection from the storm, on the opposite bank, was pitiful. One laundress had no screams of terror or groans of suffering over physical fright; her wails were loud and continuous because her savings had been left in the quarters, and facing death in that frail box, as she was pulled through the turbid flood, was nothing to the pecuniary loss. It was all the men could do to keep her from springing into the wagon-bed to return and search for her money.

On still another branch of Big Creek there was another body of men wrestling with wind and wave. Several companies, marching to New Mexico, had encamped for the night, and the freshet came as suddenly upon them as upon all of us. The colonel in command had to seize his wife, and waded up to his arms in carrying her to a safe place. Even then, they were warned that the safety was but temporary. The ambulances were harnessed up, and they drove through water that almost swept them away, before they reached higher ground. . . .

When the day dawned, we were surrounded by water, and the havoc about us was dreadful. But what a relief it was to have the rain cease, and feel the comfort of daylight! Eliza broke up her bunk to make a fire, and we had breakfast for everybody, owing to her self-sacrifice! The water began to subside, and the place looked like a vast laundry. All the camp was flying with blankets, bedding and clothes. We were drenched, of course, having no dry shoes even, to replace those in which we had raced about in the mud during the night. But these were small inconveniences, compared with the agony of terror that the night had brought. As the morning advanced, and the stream fell constantly, we were horrified by the sight of a soldier, swollen beyond all recognition, whose drowned body was imbedded in the side of the bank, where no one could reach it, and where we could not escape the sight of it. He was one who had implored us to save him, and our failure to do so seemed even more terrible than the night before, as we could not keep our fascinated gaze from the stiffened arm that seemed to have been stretched out entreatingly.

Though we were thankful for our deliverance, the day was a

depressing one, for the horror of the drowning men near us could not be put out of our minds. . . .

From *Tenting on the Plains*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895.

## *General Sheridan Hunts the Buffalo*

by DE B. R. KEIM

[De B. R. Keim spent six months on the frontier watching General P. H. Sheridan's troops operate against the Indians. A year later he reported his observations in book form. Keim was the author of extensive miscellaneous writings, which include historical dramas, travels in Alaska, reports on American consular service in the Far East, the Near East, and South America, a blue book on Washington society, a handbook to the Capitol, and a guidebook to Washington. The last was the standard work during the last twenty-five years of the nineteenth century.]

TO RELIEVE the monotony of inactivity the Commanding General, much to the pleasure of a number of the officers of the staff and garrison at Fort Hays, proposed a "genuine" buffalo hunt. The diversion was also in part out of compliment to Captain Merryman, of the U.S. revenue cutter M'Culloch, then on a visit to headquarters. A bright day in October was fixed for the sport. Accordingly at an early hour the horses were sent to the railroad and put on the cars. Leaving Hays City we ran up the track, a distance of thirty miles. Here, by means of a gangplank, the horses were led out of the cars and saddled by the orderlies. Leaving the guard the General had brought with him to protect the train, we mounted and "lit out," as rapid locomotion is called in that locality. Each person wore a brace of pistols for close work, and carried a breech-loading rifle to use at greater distance.

After a lively gallop of several miles, passing within the cordon of watchful sentinels, always found on the outskirts, we struck a herd numbering several thousand animals. Our approach had already been signalled and the herd was moving off at a rapid pace. There was no time to lose. Each one of the party singled out his animal, and putting spurs to his horse dashed after, striving to get abreast his game at a distance of a few paces, in order to deliver his fire. The General led off in the charge followed by Merryman, who, accustomed to salt water navigation, swayed from side to side. He, how-



ever, maintained a vigorous hold upon the pommel of the saddle, bounded into the air and returned emphatically, but not always gracefully, into his saddle with every leap of his horse. The General, after considerable manoeuvring, managed to separate a fine cow from her companions. The chase was quite spirited for several hundred yards, but a well directed shot under the shoulder, which very summarily suspended the powers of locomotion on the part of the buffalo, put a termination to the race. Several of the party soon became busily engaged on their own account in the exciting sport. One young bull, of irate temper, finding himself selected as a target, undertook to show fight and turned upon his pursuer. For some minutes the characters were reversed, and, judging from appearances, it might have been supposed that the buffalo was the hunter. In the course of an hour five animals were killed. Most of the horses, however, were perfectly "green," and consequently no use whatever, except to follow, giving the rider an opportunity to witness the sport without participating in it.

There is something majestic and formidable in the appearance of a buffalo. It is therefore not surprising that but few horses will readily approach sufficiently near to enable the hunter to make a close shot. Some horses rebel, notwithstanding every effort to allay their alarm. Others, by a proper course of training, carry their riders, without any direction, into just the position desirable. Such an animal is a treasure in the esteem of a plainsman. He talks about his "buffalo horse" with more pride than he would of himself, had he accomplished a feat so wonderful. It was interesting to watch the movements of the trained horse. He approached the buffalo rapidly but cautiously. His eyes were steadily fixed upon the animal and watched every motion. Should the buffalo expedite his pace, the horse did likewise, regulating his increased rate of speed so as to get alongside without unnecessarily alarming the animal. As the horse came abreast, the buffalo naturally swayed his course away to the right or left. This was the dangerous part of the chase. Should the buffalo after moving away, the horse following, turn suddenly, a collision would be almost certain. This the horse seemed to know so perfectly that he changed direction on a long turn. After firing, should the animal fall, the horse kept up his speed, described a circle bringing him back to the carcass of the dead or wounded buffalo.

Timid horses and awkward riders run great risks of their lives by not knowing how to avoid any hostile demonstrations on the part

of the buffalo. The latter has the advantage, and by not keeping a close watch, fatal results are sure to occur. An old hunter, mounted on a "buffalo horse," in every sense of the term, dashing fearlessly across the plain in pursuit of this truly magnificent game, presents a picture the very culmination of manly sport.

During our own attempts to make a fair show of knowledge of the subject, there were several very narrow escapes as regarded personal safety. Two of our party being in pursuit of the same animal, there was quite a competition as to who would get the first shot. The rider in the rear, in the excitement, had his pistol go off out of time. The ball passed within a very few inches of the front rider's head. Both were alarmed, and the race terminated by the one apologizing, and the other feeling around to see whether he had been hurt.

While our own sport was going on, two Mexicans with us were to be seen in the very midst of the herd following up the younger animals. Each rider had his lariat, holding the coil in one hand and with the other swinging the loop above his head in order to get the proper momentum. It was short work. At the first attempt, each man had his noose over the head of a fine yearling. The horses gradually slackened their gait, while the terrified buffaloes made every effort to escape. One of the lariats, unfortunately, parted and off went the animal with it dangling at his heels. The other calf was secured and sent to the train.

After several hours occupied in the exciting amusement of the chase, we returned to the cars. The horses, much blown, were unsaddled and put aboard. A party of soldiers were sent out to bring in the meat.

On our homeward journey a fine herd of antelopes was discovered ahead, close to the track. By a little skillful calculation of time, distance, and velocity, the engineer brought us within three hundred yards. A perfect fusillade was opened out of the car windows, during which one of the beautiful little animals was seen to fall. The train stopped and the "meat" was brought in. This terminated the day's sport. At nine o'clock in the evening we reached Fort Hays.

I may, in this connection, make a few passing notes upon the resorts and habits of the American bison or buffalo, as he is popularly designated. With the savage nomad, he constitutes the actual and aboriginal occupant of the plains. The movements of the immense herds of buffaloes regulate the locations of the savage tribes. They constitute the commissariat of the Indian, and govern frequently his

ability for war or control his desire for peace. Prior to the opening of the country to the settler, the buffalo roamed over the entire territory from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains, and from the plains of western Texas to the head-waters of the Missouri in the north. To-day the buffalo is rarely seen south of the Red River, or within two hundred miles of the Missouri, at Kansas City. In numbers he is evidently rapidly diminishing, though the countless herds found during the summer along the railroads, would seem to indicate that the race is far from running out.

The buffalo is migratory in his habits and subject to two influences in his movements, the seasons, and the abundance or scarcity of pasturage. The migrations of the herds appear to be simultaneous. I have seen herd after herd stretching over a distance of eighty miles, all tending in the same direction. During the early spring months they are generally to be found in the regions south of the Canadian, as far as the Red. Here the winters are short and the grass shoots early. As the pasturage makes its appearance towards the north, the herds follow, moving across the Cimmaron, the Arkansas, the Smoky Hill, and Republican, and beyond the Platte. Cases frequently occur where small herds becoming detached from the main bodies, and particularly the old bulls and cows unable to travel, remain north of the Platte, and manage to eke out an existence through the coldest winters. Other small herds are found in different localities far south during the summer. These exceptions, to the general rule of their habits, are always the result of causes, such as inability to follow the main herd, or being detached and driven back.

In all his habits the buffalo displays an instinctive sense of organization and discipline which alone could accomplish the wise provisions of nature in subsisting such enormous masses of animal life. Not only does the great herd, as a mass, preserve a remarkable concert of action "on the move," but it is subdivided into smaller herds, which seem to be composed of animals having peculiar affinities. These small herds have each their leader, always a fine young or middle-aged bull, whose fighting qualities had won for him the ascendancy over all other male competitors. In the black mass presented by the great herd a space, sometimes as limited as a hundred yards, can always be detected between the sub-divisions. Each herd always preserves its relative position to the others, and, in case of alarm, takes flight in a single mass. It also preserves the same relation in galloping to water.



As a precaution against surprise, each herd has its videttes, through which the alarm is given upon the appearance of danger. Approaching a herd, groups of buffaloes in fours and fives are first seen. These, taking the alarm, gallop towards the common centre. The ever-watchful and suspicious young males immediately on the outer edge of the herd receive the movements of the videttes as warnings. They sniff the air, and with piercing vision scan the plain. If the cause of alarm be discovered, the herd-leader, heading the way, sets out, followed by the cows and calves, while the males form a sort of rear guard and flankers. For the sake of protection, the females and the young occupy the centre of the herd. By a wise instinct, the young are thus secured from the ravenous wolf, and the natural timidity of the cow is guarded against sudden or unnecessary alarm.

The evening is the usual time for the herds to set out for water. When moving for this purpose, they may be seen in single-file, following their leaders, traveling at an ambling gait. Frequently they travel eight or ten miles to the nearest stream or pond. The passage of buffalo in this way over the same ground soon marks out a well-beaten track, resembling a foot-path, and known to hunters as the "buffalo trail." On the banks of the streams running through the buffalo country these trails may be seen converging from all directions, some faintly marked, while some are worn eight and ten inches in depth. These trails not only follow the most direct course to a given point, but always lead to water or a water-course. The traveler on the plains is frequently obliged to take to the trail of the buffalo in order to reach water. In many places the "buffalo wallow" furnishes a supply of stagnant water which, though extremely unpalatable, has often saved life. The buffalo wallow is a circular, dish-shaped hole in the earth, about twelve feet in diameter and a foot deep at its greatest concavity. During the warm season, immense clouds of dust are to be seen rising over a herd quietly grazing. Like other animals of his species, the buffalo frequently amuses himself by wallowing in the fine sand or plowing up the earth with his horns. The surface once broken, the place becomes a common resort, until the wallow assumes the shape above described. In the wet season, the rain fills up the wallow, and, unless consumed, standing water is to be found there far into summer.

Among the young buffalo bulls there seems to be a remarkable aspiration to secure the leadership of the herd. This question of rank

is annually settled by a test of strength. Certain ambitious males set themselves up as competitors. The first opportunity that offers is accepted. The contests are stubborn and severe—frequently fatal. If the old leader gets the upper hand, he is doubly a hero, and his claims to pre-eminence are greater than ever. Next in rank to the herd-leader are a number of young buffalo, courtiers and gallants, who have free range of the herd so long as they do not come in contact with the leader, or trespass upon his privileges. Between the young and the old males there is an inveterate hostility. As the young grow in ability to cope with the fathers of the herd, a regular conflict takes place. If it terminates in favor of the former, the old buffaloes are unceremoniously driven out. Thus banished from their associations when strong and active, the old animals form a sort of hermit order on the outskirts of the herds, where they constitute the outer guard. These competitive encounters are constantly taking place. As one generation of males succeeds another, those driven out can never return, but live an exiled existence until age, the hunter's bullet, disease, or the ravenous wolf, finishes their days.

The females display, most remarkably, the attachments of maternity. In one instance, I remember, our party shot and badly wounded a fine calf about six months old. As the calf fell, the mother turned and looked upon it with an expression of absolute grief. Her offspring made repeated efforts to rise, but without avail. The mother, in perfect despair, ran around her young, uttering low moans. As we approached, the mother's nature was entirely changed. She stamped upon the ground as if to warn us to "keep off." Although she made no direct attack, she manifested a disposition to defend her young, which was only exceeded by the shouts and firing, which seemed to terrify her. To put the calf out of its suffering and relieve the distress of the mother, and insure our own safety, both animals were dispatched.

Always in the vicinity of the buffalo herd the hunter encounters that beautiful little animal, the antelope. Shy and timid, with an acute scent and far-reaching vision, it is difficult of approach. An old animal is killed now and then by a long-range rifle. Like other animals, the antelope has a remarkable development of that too-often fatal instinct, curiosity. By taking advantage of this failing, the experienced hunter succeeds in taking the game. The usual means resorted to is "still hunting." A red flannel flag, fastened to a short stick, is posted in a conspicuous place. The hunter then secretes him-

self and waits for an opportunity. This is always a slow process; but, with a proper degree of patience, if anywhere in the vicinity of antelopes so that the flag can be seen, he is sure "to bring a haul."

The wolves and the coyotes are the inveterate enemies of the antelope, and continually waylay its path. The fleetness of the animal, however, is its complete protection until weakened by age, or probably, it has been crippled. In times of danger, if possible, the antelope takes refuge within the lines of the nearest herd of buffaloes. Its excessive fright at these times often causes whole herds of the mighty beasts to take to their heels as if a battalion of hunters were on their tracks.

Probably one of the most perfect pictures of desertion and despair is the aged and enfeebled buffalo. Driven first from the herd as if it were a mortal offense to live beyond a certain period of summers, or his inability to follow its movements, he is left alone to wander feebly about, without companions, and an object of patient, sometimes decidedly impatient, watchfulness on the part of the wolf. When the buffalo has arrived at such an advanced age, he will be found near a constant stream where grass grows in abundance. Isolated, shy in his movements, and alarmed at the slightest indications of danger, he seems to lose his customary boldness, and becomes an easily terrified and suspicious animal. He loses his vigorous appearance, and literally becomes worn down and decrepit. The timidity of age grows upon him, and the solemn stillness and solitude which surrounds him is calculated to increase rather than diminish this instinctive terror. Few of these superannuated specimens come to a natural end. The starving wolf and his diminutive companion the coyote, are ready to take advantage of the first favorable opportunity of hastening the demise of the object of their solicitude and observation. Under the goading impulse of hunger, the wolf does not hesitate to attack any buffalo who may have strayed from the herd. As if tired of waiting for the natural course of expiring fires of nature, his wolfship, with a few comrades, begins a regular series of battles until his victim is overpowered.

On one occasion while present with a small detachment of scouts, we suddenly drew to the summit of a "divide." In the valley below an old buffalo, and a pack of seven large gray wolves, were evidently in the act of engaging in a mortal fray. The old buffalo, as if realizing his situation, stood with his head down and confronting the wolves. At times he threw his head up and down, dropped out his



blackened tongue, and constantly uttered a low hoarse roar. We determined to witness the conflict, which was evidently at hand. We halted and lariatd our animals. The buffalo, so much engrossed in his own safety, failed to discover our presence, though not more than several hundred yards off. The wolves saw us. This only sharpened their appetite, and seemed to hasten their desire to secure the feast which they had before them. The wolves were seated upon their haunches and formed a sort of semicircle in front of the buffalo. They resembled so many wise men in council. The buffalo stood a few paces off, very careful to keep his moppy head towards his starving tormentors, and his hindquarters in an opposite direction, free from any demonstration in the rear. By way of response to the fierce guttural effusions of the buffalo, the wolves at times set up a mournful chorus. No sooner did the wolves see us than they slyly deployed for action. Finding his rear thus in danger, the buffalo made a dive at the nearest wolf, tumbling him over and over. During this movement, however, the rest of the pack pounced upon the hind legs of the buffalo, snarling and snapping, and tearing at his hams. The object, evidently, was to hamstring their antagonist. These attacks in the rear diverted the attention of the buffalo from the hapless victim of his first charge. The animal turned to attack in the opposite direction, but his tormentors were once more at his vulnerable point.

The contest after these opening performances grew lively and exciting. The buffalo evidently fully appreciated the situation, and the wolves were not to be robbed of their meal. The hind-quarters of the buffalo streamed with blood, and the animal showed signs of exhaustion. He did not dare to lie down for that would be fatal. The wolves had three of their number *hors du combat*. The noise of the contest had attracted quite an audience of coyotes, and a few interloper wolves, sitting at a distance, licking their chops, and impatiently awaiting the issue, evidently expecting an invitation to participate in the feast. The buffalo made several efforts at flight, but soon found that was a useless manoeuvre. The battle test had been going on more than an hour, and having no more time to devote to that sort of recreation, a well directed volley laid out several of their wolfish excellencies. The buffalo did not stop to thank us for our timely assistance, but took the first moment of relief to hobble off. The animal was evidently badly injured, and doubtless our

interference was merely prolonging the burden of life, now doubly an encumbrance. . . .

The construction of railroads has developed a new and extensive field for pleasure seekers. The facilities of communication now opened with that strange and remote section, the plains, and, at the same time, the opportunity afforded of seeing the buffalo, that animal above all others associated from our earliest years with everything wild and daring, now invites visitors from all parts of the country. From the cities of Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and other less important points during the autumn of 1868, excursions were made up at low rates of fare.

The following announcement of an excursion I found at one of the railroad stations. I give a copy of it as one of the peculiar and progressive innovations made by the railways.

### RAILWAY EXCURSION and BUFFALO HUNT.

An excursion train will leave Leavenworth, at 8 a.m. and Lawrence, at 10 a.m. for

#### SHERIDAN,

On Tuesday, October 27, 1868, and return on Friday.

This train will stop at the principal stations both going and returning.

Ample time will be had for a grand Buffalo

#### HUNT ON THE PLAINS.

Buffaloes are so numerous along the road that they are shot from the cars nearly every day. On our last excursion our party killed twenty buffaloes in a hunt of six hours.

All passengers can have refreshments on the cars at reasonable prices.

Tickets of round trip from Leavenworth, \$10.00.

The inducements, at these rates, to any one anxious to visit the plains, and see a live buffalo, and perhaps a "live injun," not so acceptable at that time, were certainly very tempting, as the full expense of the above trip, at the regular rate of fare, would not have been short of seventy dollars. A quarter of a century hence, the

buffalo and the Indian will have entirely disappeared from the line of the railways. The few that still survive will have then been driven to the most remote, inaccessible, and uninhabitable sections, if not entirely exterminated.

From *Sheridan's Troopers on the Borders*, Philadelphia: Claxton, Remesen, & Heflinger, 1870.

## *A Prairie Fire*

by ELIZABETH B. CUSTER

[For a biographical note on Mrs. Custer see "A Flood at Fort Hays."]

WE HAD NOT BEEN long alone, when a great danger threatened us. The level plateau about our post, and the valley along the river near us, were covered with dry prairie grass, which grows thickly and is matted down into close clumps. It was discovered, one day, that a narrow thread of fire was creeping on in our direction, scorching these tufts into shrivelled brown patches that were ominously smoking when first seen. As I begin to write of what followed, I find it difficult; for even those living in Western States and Territories regard descriptions of prairie-fires as exaggerated, and are apt to look upon their own as the extreme to which they ever attain. I have seen the mild type, and know that a horseman rides through such quiet conflagrations in safety. The trains on some of our Western roads pass harmless through belts of country when the flames are about them; there is no impending peril, because the winds are moderate. When a tiny flame is discovered in Kansas, or other States, where the wind blows a hurricane so much of the time, there is not a moment to lose. Although we saw what was hardly more than a suspicion of smoke, and the slender, sinuous, red tongue along the ground, we women had read enough of the fires in Kansas to know that the small blaze meant that our lives were in jeopardy. Most of us were then unacquainted with those precautions which the experienced Plains-man takes, and, indeed, we had no ranchmen near us to set us the example of caution which the frontiersman so soon learns. We should have had furrows ploughed around the entire post in double lines, a certain distance apart, to check the approach of fire. There was no time to fight the foe with a like weapon, by burning over a portion of the grass between the advancing blaze and our



post. The smoke rose higher and higher beyond us, and curling, creeping fire began to ascend into waves of flame with alarming rapidity, and in an incredibly short time we were overshadowed with a dark pall of smoke.

The Plains were then new to us. It is impossible to appreciate their vastness at first. The very idea was hard to realize, that from where we lived we looked on an uninterrupted horizon. We felt that it must be the spot where someone first said, "The sky fits close down all around." It fills the soul with wonder and awe to look upon the vastness of that sea of land for the first time. As the sky became lurid, and the blaze swept on toward us, surging to and fro in waving lines as it approached nearer and nearer, it seemed that the end of the world, when all shall be rolled together as a scroll, had really come. The whole earth appeared to be on fire. The sky was a sombre canopy above us, on which flashes of brilliant light suddenly appeared as the flames rose, fanned by a fresh gust of wind. There were no screams nor cries, simply silent terror and shiverings of horror, as we women huddled together to watch the remorseless fiend advancing with what appeared to be inevitable annihilation of the only shelter we had. Every woman's thoughts turned to her natural protector, now far away, and longed with unutterable longing for one who, at the approach of danger, stood like a bulwark of courage and defense. The river was half a mile away, and our feet could not fly fast enough to reach the water before the enemy would be upon us. There was no such thing as a fire-engine. The Government then had not even provided the storehouses and quarters with the Babcock Extinguisher. We were absolutely powerless, and could only fix our fascinated gaze upon the approaching foe.

In the midst of this appalling scene, we were startled anew by a roar and shout from the soldiers' barracks. Some one had, at last, presence of mind to marshal the men into line, and, assuming the commanding tone that ensures action and obedience in emergencies, gave imperative orders. Every one—citizen employee, soldiers and officers—seized gunny sacks, blankets, poles, anything available that came in their way, and raced wildly beyond the post into the midst of the blazing grass. Forming a cordon, they beat and lashed the flames with the blankets, so twisted as to deal powerful blows. It was a frenzied fight. The soldiers yelled, swore and leaped frantically upon beds of blazing grass, condensing a lifetime of riotous energy into these perilous moments. We women were not breathless and

trembling over fears for ourselves alone: our hearts were filled with terror for the brave men who were working for our deliverance. They were men to whom we had never spoken, nor were we likely ever to speak to them, so separated are the soldiers in barracks from an officer's household. Sometimes we saw their eyes following us respectfully, as we rode about the garrison, seeming to have in them an air of possession, as if saying, "That's our captain's or our colonel's wife." Now, they were showing their loyalty, for there are always a few of a regiment left behind to care for the company property, or to take charge of the gardens for the soldiers. These men, and all the other brave fellows with them, imperiled their lives in order that the officers who had gone out for Indian warfare, might come home and find "all's well." Let soldiers know that a little knot of women are looking to them as their saviors, and you will see what nerves of iron they have, what inexhaustible strength they can exhibit.

No sooner had the flames been stamped out of one portion of the plain, than the whole body of men were obliged to rush off in another direction and begin the thrashing and tramping anew. It seemed to us that there was no such thing as conquering anything so insidious. But the wind, that had been the cause of our danger, saved us at last. That very wind which we had reviled all winter for its doleful howlings around our quarters and down the chimneys; that self-same wind that had infuriated us by blowing our hats off when we went out to walk, or impeded our steps by twisting our skirts into hopeless folds about our ankles—was now to be our savior. Suddenly veering, as is its fashion in Kansas, it swept the long tongues of flame over the bluffs beyond us, where the lonely coyote and its mate were driven into their lair. By this vagary of the element, that is never anywhere more variable than in Kansas, our quarters, our few possessions, and no doubt our lives, were saved. With faces begrimed and blistered, their clothes black with soot and smoke, their hands burnt and numb from violent effort, the soldiers and citizen employees dragged their exhausted bodies back to garrison, and dropped down anywhere to rest.

The tinge of green that had begun to appear was now gone, and the charred, smoke-stained earth spread as far as we could see, making more desolate the arid, treeless country upon which we looked. It was indeed a blackened and dismal desert that encircled us, and we knew that we were deprived of the delight of the tender green

of early spring, which carpets the Plains for a brief time before the sun parches and turns to russet and brown the turf of our Western prairies. . . .

In our Western prairie fires the flame is often a mile long, perhaps not rising over a foot high, but, sweeping from six to ten miles an hour, it requires the greatest exertion of the ranchmen, with all kinds of improvised flails, to beat out the fire. The final resort of a frontiersman, if the flames are too much for him to overcome, is to take refuge with his family, cattle, horses, etc., in the garden, where the growing vegetables make an effectual protection. Alas, when he finds it safe to venture from the green oasis, the crops are not only gone, but the roots are burned, and the ground valueless from the parching of the terrible heat. When a prairie fire is raging at ten miles an hour, the hurricane lifts the tufts of loosened bunch grass, which in occasional clumps is longer than the rest, carrying it far beyond the main fire, and thus starting a new flame. No matter how weary the pioneer may be after a day's march, he neglects no precautions that can secure him from fire. He twists into wisp the longest of the bunch grass, trailing it around the camp; the fire thus started is whipped out by the teamsters, after it has burned over a sufficient area for safety. They follow the torch of the leader with branches of the green willow or twigs of cottonwood bound together.

From *Tenting on the Plains*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895.

## *The Battle of the Arickaree*

by WINFIELD FREEMAN

[Winfield Freeman, lawyer, author, traveler, businessman, and active Republican came to Kansas from his native Ohio in 1879. A well-known public figure during his Kansas years, he held numerous elective offices, lectured both in Kansas and abroad, and wrote widely on the Orient as well as on historical topics.]

IN THE SUMMER OF 1868, a body of Indians called renegades, composed of parts of several tribes, made a raid on settlers who occupied the Saline and Solomon valleys, killed several people, drove away horses and made captive two young white women.

Many of the settlers along the Solomon and Saline rivers were formerly soldiers, only three years out of the Union army. They



quickly formed a mounted company and gave pursuit, but could not overtake the fleeing Indians.

About this time scouts reported to General Sheridan, in command of that department, that a small band of Indians, not to exceed two hundred and fifty, was camped on the western frontier of Kansas. He decided to form a company of experienced ex-soldiers, buffalo hunters and other frontiersmen, to pursue the enemy. Col. George A. Forsythe, of General Sheridan's staff, received orders to form the company. Word was soon passed up the Saline and Solomon valleys that such a troop was to be formed at Fort Harker, in Ellsworth county. In a few days, ex-soldiers, buffalo hunters, frontiersmen and scouts had assembled there, all anxious to enlist. Lieut. Fred Beecher, of the regular army was detailed to select a group of fifty men. Personally acquainted with many of them because of his capacity as chief of scouts, he was able to select men of mettle and daring. Among those selected were Capt. H. H. Tucker, an Ottawa county lawyer; Judge Howard Morton, of Ottawa county; S. E. Stillwell, at that time only eighteen years of age. At twelve this youth was able to speak Spanish, and handle a gun like a frontiersman; at eighteen he went on the plains as a scout. He was the youngest man in the command.

The company made a forced march to Fort Hays and from there up the Smoky Hill River to Fort Wallace, a distance of two hundred miles. They remained at Fort Wallace a day and two nights while supplies of ammunition, rations, pack mules and a few horses were gotten ready. On either the eighth or tenth of September the troop of forty-nine men left Fort Wallace, with Colonel Forsythe in command. Lieutenant Beecher was second in command. Dr. Moore, Fort Wallace, a citizen surgeon, went along. This body of men expected to encounter a band of 250 or 300 Indians, then reported to be in the north within a range of eighty miles.

While the command was at Fort Wallace a band of Indians attacked a wagon train near Sheridan, then the western terminus of the Kansas Pacific railroad, about fifteen miles east of Fort Wallace. The wagon train lost four men and considerable stock was run away, this incident hastening the departure from Fort Wallace and the line of march was made toward Sheridan, at which place the trail of the Indians was picked up and followed north until they reached the Republican River below the forks. They then marched north along the banks of Spring Creek, where the scouts discovered a trail which

led to a place where a temporary Indian village had been located. Investigations showed the village had been composed of about six hundred lodges and the Indians had departed only a few days before. The opinion that a larger body of Indians than reported at the fort was confirmed.

The trail led westward toward the Arickaree and that evening camp was formed on the north bank of the creek in a narrow valley, opposite a sandy island. All around was peace and quietness, and the stillness of life impressed the experienced scouts that the presence of the troop was known to the red men, yet the Indians' presence was unknown to the troop.

Sharp Grover, an experienced scout from Fort Wallace, stated to Colonel Forsythe that indications convinced him that a large body of Indians was in the vicinity; so guards were placed in every direction and a strict watch kept during the night to prevent a surprise attack or the stampede of the stock. Early in the evening Grover and Stillwell went to the sandy island in the creek to see if it would offer a place in which to retreat should an attack be made during the night or if it would be a place to make a stand, if the troop was surrounded by the Indians. The island was about one hundred and twenty-five yards long and fifty yards wide, situated in the middle of Arickaree Creek, about one hundred yards from either bank. Composed entirely of sand, it was about two and one-half feet higher than the dry bed of the creek.

Just as day was breaking the morning of September 17, all were aroused by an alarm of "Indians, Indians!" yelled by the sentinels. Confusion reigned as the Indians galloped over the hills, driving the pack mules of the troops up the valley at breakneck speed. The Indians, yelling at the top of their voices and swinging their blankets, retreated rapidly up the valley beyond rifle shot. Under the cover of darkness they had succeeded in creeping down a ravine near where the herd was held under guard and at a signal stampeded the mules and some of the horses.

Scouts were sent out and immediately every man was mounted, except those whose horses had been lost. In a few moments the Indians returned, galloping toward the troop with the unearthly yells and war whoops of the savage. The valley was alive with mounted warriors, stripped naked and painted for battle. With the chiefs, decorated with barbaric war bonnets in the lead, they rode recklessly

toward the troop—Arapahoes, Cheyennes and Sioux—singing their battle songs.

Sharp Grover, who was near Colonel Forsythe, pointed out the advantages of the island as a place of refuge. "No time must be lost," he urged and the command was given—"Reach the island and unhitch the horses." Pell-mell, every man for himself, they went over the bank with a grand rush, over the embankment, across the creek bottom and onto the island. This sudden and unforeseen movement of the troops surprised and disconcerted the Indians.

Colonel Forsythe ordered Jack Stillwell to take some men to the east end of the island and hold that point if possible. He took Trudell, known as French Pete, and four other men, and quickly reached the point, digging shelter in the sand as rapidly as possible. Not a shot was to be fired until the enemy came within close range.

The savages charged the island in wild disorder, riding at top speed, yelling and shooting recklessly. The order to "fire" rang along the line and in an instant the roar of muskets rose above the yells of the Indians. Painted warriors reeled and fell as volley upon volley was poured into the charging foe. Horses freed from their riders, frenzied with fear or smarting from bullet wounds, rushed over the pits, trampling on the dead and dying. Soon warriors and horses were mingled in confusion; several great chiefs lay dying; many reached the island to rise no more; then as if by magic the enemy deflected right and left and hastily retreated; but stopping long enough to gather up many of their dead and wounded. A constant fire was kept up from the island as long as there was an Indian within rifle range.

Rallying in the protection of the hills, the savages started a new mode of attack. While more Indians appeared on the hills, yelling and shooting guns and arrows, many were discovered crawling in the grass toward the island. During the interval the soldiers had dug into the sand and banked it in front of them for greater protection, and at the same time keeping up a desultory firing at the Indians crawling in the grass, which was tall enough to hide them from view. Some of the Indians succeeded in reaching the island, but as soon as a body appeared in view it was pierced by a bullet from the scouts.

During the first hour of the battle all of the horses and mules were killed, including some of the Indian horses which had taken



refuge among the horses on the island. Firing on both sides continued until 10 o'clock in the forenoon.

A lack of organization among the Indians was quickly noticed by the scouts, giving them hope the enemy would withdraw from the battle. Presently, however, the celebrated Indian chief, Roman Nose, hero of many battles, appeared on the hillside. Up to this time he had taken no part in the battle. Stillwell, who knew the chief, and his men watched Roman Nose's movements. The Indians appeared to survey the valley, and soon were around their chief in earnest consultation. Firing had ceased and the stillness became oppressive.

In this short armistice the scouts prepared as best they could for the ordeal of a further charge of the savage foe. Anxious eyes rested on Roman Nose. Every musket was loaded, including those of the dead and wounded which were laid ready for rapid firing. Death in the sandpits was a foregone conclusion, for how could a few almost famished men withstand the repeated charge of hundreds of savages prepared for battle?

Movements of the Indians around Roman Nose indicated that order was about to be restored in the Red Man's ranks and that an intelligent hand was to direct a new charge. Roman Nose, after earnestly addressing the assembled warriors, mounted his horse armed with a lance, his favorite weapon. The chief claimed a charmed life, believing no bullet ever was made to kill him. His faith in special Providence that guarded his person caused him to be unmindful of personal danger.

The five scouts who had occupied the east end of the island had all escaped injury.

When Roman Nose assumed command about 10:30 o'clock, firing was resumed from the hillsides as well as by the Indians who lay in ambush. With Roman Nose in the lead, with wild and exultant yells, onward they came toward the island. The dust for a moment concealed the advancing horde, but soon they could be seen making directly for the east end. Stillwell ordered his men to make sure of Roman Nose at all hazards. It seemed only a moment until the Indians were on the island, riding with unchecked speed, firing and yelling like devils in wild pandemonium. Simultaneously, the scouts delivered their fire in the band about 10 o'clock, firing was dropped back under the shelter of the pits. The Indians were taken by surprise not knowing the east end was occupied, but they kept wildly on making for the west end where the main body of the troop was.

Roman Nose's spear fell from his hand and he clutched his horse's mane. His braves gathered around him and held him on his mount, and thus carried away their chief. He was mortally wounded. The Indians quickly gathered up many dead and wounded and retreated to the hills.

After the fall of Roman Nose, the Indians made several futile attempts to reach the island. At 2 o'clock firing ceased and a deadly stillness settled upon the hills and valley, broken only by the moaning of the wounded and dying.

Presently what appeared to be a new band of Indians came into view. The hearts of the soldiers almost failed them as they knew a new order of battle soon would be formed. Through field glasses was seen an old war-horse named Dull Knife, one of the Sioux tribe. Colonel Forsythe, lying in a pit, gave orders that no man should fire until the Indians came in close range. In a few minutes the warrior band swept down the hillside across the narrow valley and into the creek bottom, shouting their terrible war cries. It seemed now that the end had surely come. Each with determination acquired only in the ordeal of death, nerved himself for the last encounter. Several scouts concentrated their fire on the new chief. He fell dead from his horse within one hundred feet of the island. His mount turned in full gallop from the island, followed by the Indians, the scouts pouring lead at the retreating horde.

Now for the first time the troop had time to help the wounded and count the dead. The sand bar was red with blood; dead men and horses were strewn about. Half the little band was killed or wounded.

Heretofore, the enemy had advanced on horseback, but now they returned to regain the body of their dead chief, marching down the valley in a solid column. Each brave sang a doleful death song. The spectacle was appalling; a drama in human life never to be repeated. The hills were occupied by the wives, mothers and daughters, urging sons, husbands and brothers to conflict. The marchers came on hastily, ending the battle as soon as they recovered the body of their dead chief.

The wounded received medical attention. Dr. Moore, the citizen surgeon, received a wound on his head in the early part of the fight. Nearly crazed by the wound, he would jump up frequently and had to be pulled back into the pit. He died during the day.

Colonel Forsythe, wounded by a ball passing through his thigh,

commanded the battle from a hastily dug hole. Lieutenant Beecher was also wounded and before his death at nine o'clock that night, implored his comrades to shoot him. Captain Morton was shot in the back early in the morning. John Harrington, who was struck on the forehead by an arrow, recovered. Captain Culver, a trooper from Solomon, was shot in the head and died instantly. Culver station, in Ottawa county, on the Saline River, is named in his honor.

Under cover of night, Stillwell and his four men, who had occupied the east end of the island, rejoined the remainder of the command. On their way they heard a voice "Have I no friends to help me?" They recognized the voice as that of Scout Farley. Directed by his cries, they found him on the north bank of the Arickaree, where he had occupied a favorable position for sharp-shooting during the day. In the last charge he was mortally wounded. He was taken to the sand pits and died on the island a few days later. His home was on the Saline River.

The troop was without water the entire day and the creek afforded none at that time of the year. To keep from perishing of thirst they dug into the sand and six feet down they found enough muddy water to fill their canteens.

After a conference Jack Stillwell and Pete Trudell volunteered to attempt to pass through the Indian lines and reach Fort Wallace. It was decided they should start their perilous journey at midnight. Capture by the Indians meant certain death. They were provided with horse meat to eat and wore moccasins made of boot tops, to imitate the footprints of the Indians should their tracks be discovered. Each was armed with a repeating rifle and a knife. Wearing blankets, like Indians, they crawled from the island in a southerly direction, keeping close together and avoiding hollows and ravines. As they reached the hillside, several of the enemy passed by. As day began to break they had reached a point three miles from the Arickaree. They took shelter in a hollow bank. During the night in soft and sandy soil they had walked backwards and had taken other precautions so that their tracks would mislead the Indians. During the long wait that day the discharge of firearms could be plainly heard.

At nightfall they started east and south, soon discovering Indians coming from their village toward the battle ground. Hearing the sound of voices and the clatter of horses the scouts hid away from the traveled path. At dawn they reached the south fork of the Re-



publican River and to their dismay found themselves within half a mile of the Indian village. There they hid in a swamp during the day and at nightfall waded the river and started hastily in the direction of Fort Wallace. The night passed without incident; and concluding they had passed the Indians, the pair decided to journey during the day. But to their dismay about seven o'clock that morning they discovered the advance guard of the Cheyenne village moving south to join the southern Cheyennes. The men had now reached Goose Creek and there they found the carcass of a buffalo which had been killed the winter before. The bleaching ribs were covered by hide enough for shelter and it was an easy matter to crawl into the shell which provided a lodging place more acceptable than elegant. From this unique cover they saw the village pass southward.

Trudell became weak and sick from drinking water out of a buffalo hole. Morning came with a light rain and snow which prevented them from seeing far, but they continued their travel and about noon reached a wagon road, which they recognized as being fifteen miles from Fort Wallace. They soon met two colored soldiers carrying dispatches to Colonel Carpenter, commander of H Troop, Tenth U.S. Cavalry, encamped at Lake station, seventy miles from the Arickaree.

The scouts reached Fort Wallace at sundown on September 20 and reported to Colonel Bankhead, the officer in command, who wired General Sheridan at Fort Hays. General Sheridan replied to proceed with all available troops to Colonel Forsythe's relief. The command left Fort Wallace at midnight with wagons, ammunition and supplies.

Meanwhile at the island there was further fighting. On the morning of the eighteenth, before daylight, a body of Indians came down the Arickaree on horseback. The scouts opened fire and the Indians retreated at great speed. These Indians were on a journey, and knew nothing of the previous battles.

No men on the island were killed after the first day, but the wounded suffered greatly from the want of food and care. The food supply was horse meat. On the third night, no relief having come, it was concluded the two scouts had been killed and two more should be sent out. Jack Donovan and Capt. A. J. Riley volunteered this time and they were instructed to return if they did not find relief. These scouts were fortunate in intercepting Colonel Carpenter, who was seeking the island, having no information as to its exact location.

Donovan at once was mounted on a mule and led the relief command to the island, while Captain Riley continued on to Fort Wallace.

On the morning of the ninth day after the battle, the lookouts raised the cry of "Indians, Indians!" The men, exhausted by the fighting and lack of food, felt the end had surely come. Over the hills could be seen a dark line of mounted men riding at high speed. Each soldier grasped his rifle for the final struggle.

Realization that the advancing horsemen were the relief troop came when the rising sun reflected from the saber and carbine, and cheer upon cheer rose from the island. The brave men who had crawled away at midnight had succeeded. Men who had not faltered in battle, now wept like children.

Thus with the return to Fort Wallace ended the battle that in tradition of the Red Man was one of the most tragic in frontier warfare.

From the *Salina Journal*, March 14, 1934.

## *The Grasshopper Plague*

by ANNE E. BINGHAM

[Anne E. Bingham was related to a number of persons who figured in Kansas history, including Elizabeth B. Custer, wife of General George A. Custer, and J. B. Case, Abilene pioneer, businessman, and politician. The farm on which Mrs. Bingham and her husband lived at the time of the grasshopper invasion was in Geary County.]

THE YEAR 1874 we had a good wheat crop. Our peach trees had come to their first bearing and hung full of fruit. One afternoon in August as I sat sewing I heard a noise on the roof like hailstones. Stepping out I saw the air full of grasshoppers. My husband just then came in sight with a load of prairie hay. He called out, laughing, "Oh, see the grasshoppers." They got down to business right away. The leaves began falling from the cottonwood shade trees about the house. We saw, too, that our fine peach crop was on the way to destruction. The peaches were about two-thirds grown and beginning to turn red on one side. My husband went out to gather them, and I put the washboiler on the stove, filling it half full of water. I happened to have the sugar, and I cooked the green peaches, canned them, and they were even nicer than ripe ones, having the flavor of the pits.

I spiced many of them, and we saved our peaches, which lasted more than a year. The "hoppers" ate the ones left on the trees down to the pits. Our brother from Washington visited us in November. He broke off some twigs with the stones still hanging on them to take home as evidence, for he said if he told his friends they would call it a "fish story." The grasshoppers would alight in the middle of the day for their "siesta." The sides of the house and the walks were covered with them. They flew up like a swarm of bees at one's step. They had the most voracious appetites of any living thing. One or two would begin on a melon; as the place grew larger others came, and the melon would soon be eaten down to a shell. Onions and beets were a luxury to them, but my husband saved ours by turning a furrow over them. The corn was destroyed down to the stalk, and farmers began cutting it to save it for fodder. The crop was a poor one anyway that year, for lack of rain. The grasshoppers stayed so long that they destroyed the newly sowed fields of wheat. My husband resowed wheat in November and we had a fair crop the next year. We could get mosquito netting at that time, and we had the windows and doors screened. The netting went, like other things, down the throats of the pests, and I had to keep the windows closed. It was difficult even to save the clothes on the line; anything on the grass would surely go. When the "hoppers" went they left destruction over the state. Kansas was always distinctly erratic, like a child—happy and laughing one minute and hateful and contrary the next. She had attracted attention to herself, been made famous by her eccentricities. It had been bleeding Kansas, droughty Kansas, the state of cyclones, the state of cranks, the state of mortgages—and now grasshopper fame had come! It seemed like a land of chance. I had come to think, almost, that as everything appeared upside down I wouldn't be surprised to see the people walking about on their heads. The situation was beyond expression, and Anne would shut her jaws tight and play the organ as loud as she could make it go. I saw times through those years that I wouldn't have given the snap of my fingers for the whole of Kansas. Everybody wanted to sell and nobody wanted to buy. Few could leave, because they had not the means to get away with. . . .

From "Sixteen Years on a Kansas Farm," *Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society*, 1919-1922.



## *The Blizzard of 1886*

by O. P. BYERS

[O. P. Byers came to Kansas from Indiana in 1878, and for more than twenty-five years worked for the Union Pacific, the Rock Island, and the Hutchinson and Southern in such capacities as telegraph operator, station agent, train dispatcher, train master, and superintendent.]

THE MORNING of December 31 dawned clear and mild, with a low barometer, and a peculiar yellowish purple bordering the northern horizon. Early in the forenoon a single fleecy cloud from the northwest and a very rapidly rising barometer foretold a coming storm. By noon a light rain was falling. The temperature in a few hours had fallen below zero. The storm, gaining force hourly, continued throughout the night, and by morning it might very truthfully be said the state was frozen solid. This in itself was not unusual, nor was it seriously feared, but as the storm did not abate during the second day or the following night the situation became alarming. The temperature continued to fall until it then reached twenty degrees below zero. Neither had the terrifying wind abated in the slightest. The atmosphere had assumed a peculiar blackness characteristic of such storms, and the fine, driven snow made breathing most difficult. Day after day the storm continued, each cessation quickly followed by another storm, making it practically continuous. The temperature did not rise to zero from the first night to the last, the latter part of the month, and generally ranged from fifteen to thirty below.

A complete failure of crops the previous season had left the settler on the high prairie in no position to provide against such an emergency, even had he been forewarned. Never before had a storm of such intensity or duration been experienced. But little provision was made by the average man of that day for wintering his stock; in fact, because of the scarcity of feed, the animals were generally turned out to shift for themselves. It was as much as the homesteader could do to provide for his family, meager as their requirements were. Thus, in the sparsely settled western half of the state, in such a storm there was almost no chance of life for stock, and but little for man, except those who had dugouts, and only then when they were fortunate enough to reach them before the storm attained its height.

Individual cases of perishing, suffering, escaping and heroism in well-known instances would fill a volume. A systematic search of dugouts, shanties and prairie was made as soon as possible. A number of people were found in their homes frozen to death, and the ones alive were in bed, where they had been for days, as their only means to escape freezing. Many were found on the prairie, where they had become lost and perished. Much as the town people suffered, they fared well compared with the settler. Widely separated from one another, in the desperation of almost certain death, many attempted refuge with more fortunate neighbors, and generally with disastrous results. Several perished attempting to reach home. One of the most remarkable cases was a homesteader in northwestern Kansas. He and his team of two horses were found frozen to death within fifty feet of his dugout. Animal instinct had guided the horses home, but so impossible was it to see even a few feet, he either believed himself lost on the prairie and the animals unable to go further, or he perished on the road home. His family, in the dugout only a few feet away, knew nothing of his presence for two days.

A well-known case of an entire family perishing was that of a farmer who started from the little town of Oberlin, in northwestern Kansas, for his claim, with his wife and six children in a wagon. A few days later all were found on the prairie frozen to death.

A pathetic case was discovered of two girls who lived with their mother on a claim in western Kansas. The girls attempted to go to the house of their brother on an adjoining farm, but became lost and perished. The mother was found in her home several days later, so badly frozen that she died.

One evening a man was reported lost at Wallace. A coil of rope was secured, one end tied around the body of a volunteer, who made a circle of probably two hundred yards. The other end of the rope was held inside the building. Fortunately the lost man was within this radius, and was brought in almost frozen stiff; in fact, amputation of a limb was afterwards necessary. The searcher knew that without this rope, if he got ten feet away from the building he would never find it again.

Jack rabbits and birds of every description were found all over the prairie frozen to death. Almost every town was destitute of fuel. Corn soon became the substitute for coal, and toward the end of the storm even that was becoming exhausted. It finally became a question of provisions. Business was suspended and schools dismissed

almost the entire month. Waterworks systems in the various cities and towns were frozen and useless; newspapers published could not be delivered by carrier, and even the post offices were idle. Telephone systems were at that time confined to cities entirely, and were practically of no service. Families huddled together in one room, with the balance of the house battened in every way possible, against the raging storm, passed anxious days in isolation. From the third day it was realized livestock on the wind-swept plains would be almost a total loss. The snowfall was not extraordinary in depth, except drifts, which were frequently ten feet high.

Every railroad in the state was completely paralyzed. Cuts were drifted full of fine snow driven by the high north wind. Trains were stalled, and the crude appliances for clearing the tracks were useless. Be it remembered, the modern rotary snowplow of today was as unknown then as the wireless telegraph or airship. Some four or five days after the beginning of the storm the tracks were partially cleared, but before trains could be moved into division points they were again blockaded. Engines were off the track and so disabled from snow service that the attempt to use them further in cleaning tracks was abandoned altogether, and the slower method of shoveling out the cuts resorted to. So deep were the drifts, it was frequently necessary to form "benches," the man down on the track pitching the snow up to a man standing on the first bench, he in turn pitching it to another man on a bench higher up, who cast it out. Oftentimes a cut thus cleared would again be drifted full within a few hours by the high wind. No attempt was made to run freight trains after the first day, and after the first week all effort to move even passenger trains across the western half of the state ceased entirely. But three passenger trains entered Denver from the east during the entire month.

Old engineers, who had for years passed over the same track daily, became lost before they had gone five miles from their starting points. Not a marker could be seen in broad daylight. In numerous cases they ran by the stations, unable to see the depots twenty feet away. Because of the great danger of running by or the impossibility of seeing signals, the dispatchers were obliged to abandon the telegraph as a means of moving trains. It became a custom for engineers to ride facing the rear, and through the vacuum created by the movement of the train, locate themselves by some familiar telegraph pole. They had no other means of forming any idea what-



ever as to where they were. Probably not in the history of railroads has a similar condition existed.

Men soon became exhausted from working day and night. Employees in all capacities were pressed into snow service. Box cars heated with temporary stoves were the sleeping quarters, and the subsistence such eatables as could be found. So crowded were the cars, unbelievable as it may seem, men were frequently seen standing perfectly upright, sound asleep and snoring.

Ten or twelve full-grown steers were found standing frozen to death on the track in a cut in the Harker hills. They had drifted in with the storm and became covered with snow. A snowplow was stalled but a few feet from them.

In western Kansas a passenger train was stopped on the level prairie by an obstruction ahead. Snow began drifting around the wheels, and in a few hours there was a solid drift up to the windows of the coaches the full length of the train. Several days later, when it was released, it was found the wheels were frozen to the rails. The cars had to be uncoupled and broken loose one at a time.

The morning of the second day of the storm the Santa Fe had several trains of cattle in western Kansas, east bound, in the usual course of business. They were rushed to Dodge City and unloaded for safety. The management congratulated itself upon thus getting them into a feeding station, which Dodge City was at the time. The next morning less than twenty-five per cent of the animals unloaded were alive. Leaving them in the cars meant certain destruction, and the railroad followed the only course that offered even a hope of saving them.

Each railroad issued a general order on the third day, refusing shipments of freight of every character. This order remained in effect almost the entire month. . . .

The net result of this storm was the most unprecedented loss of livestock ever experienced on the plains. The history of the state tells us of no catastrophe that has ever cost the loss of life and suffering produced by that terrible January, 1886. What planetary or atmospheric situation may have arisen, beyond the well-known barometric condition of the time, to have produced such an intense and continued blizzard has never been known. A weird story and sad commentary upon a land heralded everywhere as one of mild winters of short duration!

The pioneer of that day, of limited means at best, constructed

but a makeshift upon his claim, which was for barter always. The "move on" spirit was his religion. A 10 x 12 shack of cheapest material, poorly put together and scantily furnished, was his domicile. No human being could have survived this storm in them, and many of the fatalities were directly due to this fact.

The uninviting dugout, of rattlesnake and other reptile legend, alone could provide security in such a storm. Families living in them, having sufficient provisions and fuel, suffered but little discomfort.

The February following was comparatively mild and bore little evidence of the arctic conditions of the preceding weeks. The writer, an eyewitness to many of these scenes and tragedies, hesitates to record them. The extraordinary nature, severity and duration of the series of storms that memorable month make the well-established incidents resulting therefrom almost beyond belief. In a continuous residence of more than a third of a century upon the Great Plains, never has he, before or since, seen anything that even remotely approached it. . . .

*From Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1911-1912.*

# V.

## Invention and Transportation

*Since hardships bore so heavily from the time men first ventured on the western plains, it was only natural that some would turn their minds to perfecting mechanical contrivances which would free them from these hardships. Transportation was the first Kansas industry; and later when pioneers established homes, travel was both necessarily long and arduous. The history of river navigation is a forgotten story; the overland trails and the stage lines are but a memory. The advent of the railroad ultimately sounded the death-knell of both in Kansas. An average trip from Lawrence to Emporia by stage, approximately a hundred miles, took twenty-four hours; today the time by rail is ninety minutes. The first road across Kansas from east to west was the Kansas Pacific, now the Union Pacific; the second, the Santa Fe. Before the railroads, men tried to attain speed by other means—for instance, putting a sail on a wagon.*

### Windwagon

by STANLEY VESTAL

[Walter S. Campbell, who usually wrote under the name of Stanley Vestal, was born in Severy. He was a Rhodes Scholar and a long-time member of the faculty at the University of Oklahoma, where he was best known for his courses in professional writing. He was the author of many books, his favorite subject being the Old West.]

THE TRAIL TO SANTA FE led from Missouri almost a thousand miles across the Great Plains to the Spanish settlements at the foot of the Rocky Mountains.

Those plains were like the ocean, a region of magnificent distances, of desolate and barren wastes, strange, solitary, unexplored. Sometimes that ocean was a sea of grassy hillocks, sometimes level with the flatness of dead calm, oftener rolling in long swells to the far-off horizon, green, tumultuous, tossing its waves of grass under the driving winds, changing shape and color as swift cloud shadows sped over the uneven surface.

Like the sea, those plains were swept by masses of living things: vast shoals of shaggy bison, antelope, and other game, which appeared and disappeared without warning. Birds, sometimes even gulls,



flapped and soared above it. And like the sea, the plains were subject to violent storms, sudden variations of temperature, terrific gales, cruel frosts, tornadoes, and drenching cloudbursts. Here and there that empty sea was broken by buttes like islands, sterile promontories.

The emptiness, the loneliness, the pathetic solemnity of the region oppressed some men, and all women, to the verge of madness. Many, on first emerging from their familiar woodlands, became physically sick. Even Coronado's hard-boiled Spanish troopers were terrified by a country where one could see the sky under a horse's belly.

But for those hardy tempers who could love great spaces, where one spot was no more important than another, experience of the sea of grass was glorifying. On the Great Plains a man of strong identity stood always at the center of his world, a king of infinite space.

Today we think of the Santa Fe Trail in terms of wagons: wagons creaking up long prairie slopes; wagons rolling down hills; wagons grinding through heavy sand, sucking through sticky mud, swishing through tall grass; wagons with locked wheels plunging down steep river-banks; wagons snaked through clinging quicksands, or jiggling over ribbed sand-bars rough as cobblestones; wagons hauled yard by painful yard up the forbidding rocks of the Raton Pass, two slow miles a day; wagons corralled against the attacks of treacherous redskins; wagons broken down, abandoned, stranded by the loss of animals stolen by raiding savages; wagons burned in prairie fires; wagons warped and shrunk by the heat and drouth. Wagons crammed with rich furs, Mexican silver, gold bullion.

But in the old days, travellers on those plains spoke habitually of 'making port,' urged Congress to enact navigation laws for the 'prairie ocean.' Their covered wagons, appropriately dubbed 'prairie schooners,' were in fact watertight boats mounted on wheels, rising high at prow and stern. They thought of the plains in terms of sea-faring, and felt the glamour of them as a magic of the sea. They named the jumping-off place in Missouri Westport!

In Westport, fittingly enough, a company was actually formed to navigate the uncharted plains in wagons rigged with sails and steering-gear.

One spring day in 1853, the citizens of that frontier town were amazed to see a light vehicle steering down the street, driven by the

wind which filled its white sail. Horses reared and ran away, women and children fled into their houses, dogs scuttled for safety, and the men of Westport stood with open mouths, watching that strange craft come sailing in.

Its pilot lowered the sail, locked his brakes, and rolled to a stop before the entrance to the Yoakum Tavern. He disembarked, and the startled citizens gathered to inspect his bark and question him.

They learned that his name was Thomas, that he had come from somewhere east, and that his sole cargo consisted of a compass, a water butt, and a carpetbag. He walked like a seafaring man, and they suspected that he was tattooed under his faded monkey jacket. Was he a whaler, had he ever struck a fish? They could not tell, for Thomas wasted few words telling of himself. He announced that he had come as the Navigator of the Prairies, and invited them to join with him and form a company to engage in the Santa Fe trade!

In Yoakum's Tavern, leading citizens split a bottle with him, while he diverted them by explaining his plan. He proposed to build—with their backing—a fleet of large prairie clippers to carry cargo to the cussed Spaniards. The advantages of wind-power were numerous, according to the nautical stranger. Speed, economy, freedom from the expense of buying and the trouble of feeding draft animals, freedom to leave the Trail along the Arkansas River (since there would be no animals requiring water) and sail on the high prairies by compass. Westport was the outfitting place for all travellers bound west; it would be easy to have the wagons built there. Injuns would be scared of the strange craft. And there would never be any lack of wind to drive them.

But the men of Westport were not to be taken in by any clever Yankee. They dubbed the stranger Windwagon, hooted at his scheme for a 'dryland navy,' and kept their money in their pockets. And so, when the bottle was empty, Windwagon left the Tavern, not at all cast down by their ridicule. 'I'll l'arn ye,' he declared. 'I'll sail to Council Grove and back. Then maybe you'll listen to reason.'

With that, undaunted and imperturbable, he embarked in his wagon, hoisted sail, and left the staring citizens of Westport in his dusty wake. Once beyond the town, he tacked out upon the open prairie, and laid his course to the setting sun. The wisecracks returned to the Tavern, laughing at his folly. It was close upon one hundred and fifty miles to Council Grove. They thought they had seen the last of Windwagon Thomas.

His coming might have remained a nine days' wonder, had he not come sailing into port again before the nine days had elapsed, bringing with him a letter from a well-known man, who managed the blacksmith shop at the Grove. Once more he cast anchor before Yoakum's door, rolled into the Tavern, and proceeded to talk turkey to the men of Westport.

That same day the men who had made fun of him chipped in and financed the building of a super-windwagon. The Overland Navigation Company included among its members and directors Doctor J. W. Parker, a leading physician; Benjamin Newson, the Indian agent; J. J. Mastin, a young lawyer; Henry Sager; Thomas W. Adams, and the inventor, Windwagon. Under his supervision, the first ship of the plains was built and launched.

The result was a mammoth wagon, constructed after the fashion of a Conestoga prairie schooner. It was fully twenty-five feet from stem to stern, seven-foot beam, and mounted upon four huge wheels, each twelve feet in diameter, with hubs as big as barrels. The sides of the wagon-box, or cabin, rose to the top of the wheels, and above that was the deck. The craft was rigged like a catboat, with the mast stepped well forward, and carried only a mainsail.

Specifications for the steering-gear are lacking, but it is certain that the craft was intended to move backwards; that is, the tail-gate of the wagon was the prow of the ship, and the tongue was brought up and over the stern to serve as tiller. When the craft was completed, the directors gathered in Yoakum's bar and fortified themselves. Then they adjourned to witness the inventor's demonstration.

Two yoke of oxen hauled the huge contrivance out upon the open prairie, and the directors of the Company—with one exception—climbed abroad. Doctor Parker, who knew what broken bones meant, preferred to watch the maiden voyage from the hurricane deck of his saddle mule. Windwagon Thomas, elated by his importance, and perhaps by his potations, took his place on deck, hoisted the mailsail, and grasped the helm.

Slowly, the wagon creaked into motion. A strong wind caught the sail, and away it went, rolling high over all obstacles, scooting over hill and dale, tacking and veering over the plain. The passengers were at first amazed, then delighted, and at last alarmed at the speed of their craft. Doctor Parker, who had thoughtfully filled his saddlebags with necessities for any accidents, whipped his mule



into a run, and lumbered after. The windwagon made the wagons drawn by oxen seem like snails.

The directors shut up in the cabin were frightened, unaccustomed as they were to anything faster than a horse and buggy. They dared not abandon ship, and began to call upon the pilot to shorten sail.

But Windwagon Thomas was riding the waves. He paid no heed to their clamor, steering before the gale. Instead of obeying his partners, he began to show his seamanship, and yelled down to his helpless passengers, 'Watch me run her against the wind!' He put the helm over, and the heavy craft came round grandly.

But then, somehow, something went wrong. The wind caught her, and in spite of all the pilot could do, the windwagon went into reverse. Doctor Parker and his mule narrowly escaped being run down, and had to turn and fly before the monster. The steering-gear locked, and the craft went sailing round and round in a circle a mile wide.

By this time the passengers, thoroughly scared, decided to abandon ship. High as they were above ground, the jump was risky. But they risked it, rather than stay in that crazy ship with its confused hunk of a sea-captain. One by one they dropped to the ground, miraculously unhurt except for a few bruises and considerable fright.

But Windwagon Thomas was made of sterner stuff. He was evidently determined to go down with the ship, colors flying. He remained on deck, clutching the useless helm, until the mammoth wagon jolted him off as it brought up against a stake-and-rider fence on the bank of Turkey Creek.

Nothing Windwagon could say would induce the Company to build the rest of the fleet. The lubbers had no heart for prairie seafaring. They went back to their shops and their offices, put the venture down to profit and loss, and thanked heaven that they were still alive and sound. What else could be expected of men who had halted on the edge of the sea of grass?

But Windwagon remained undaunted. He embarked once more in the small, light craft in which he had come to Westport, made sail, and vanished as swiftly and mysteriously as he had come. History has no more to tell of him.

Maybe he sailed away to shoot buffalo from the afterdeck, or harpoon redskins daring enough to run afoul of him on their cruising ponies. Perhaps he ran hard around in some deep valley or

ravine, where no wind came to fill his sail, and no bull-whacker blundered in to haul him out upon the windy plain. Perhaps the cussed Injuns found him thus becalmed, and hung his hair upon some pony's bridle. There are legends among the Indians of a vehicle seen on the prairie, a wagon that was bigger than any wagon, which moved without horses or oxen to draw it, and carried a white 'flag' as tall as a tipi. What became of the Navigator of the Plains will never be known.

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## *Building the Santa Fe*

by L. L. WATERS

[L. L. Waters, a native Kansan, is Professor of Transportation at Indiana University. He did graduate work at the University of Illinois, and at one time was director of the Bureau of Business Research at the University of Kansas. Besides transportation, his writings deal with migratory farm labor, business taxation, manufacturing, and investments.]

AS IF TO MAKE UP for lost time, work on the Santa Fe was begun soon after the meeting of the Atchison Associates. T. J. Peter was in charge as chief engineer.

Peter had had considerable experience as an engineer. He had been city engineer of Cincinnati. Glenn D. Bradley, narrator of the ancient and medieval history of the Company, wrote of Peter:

It seems he was strictly temperate in his habits, and would neither smoke, chew, nor drink; but his profanity when once aroused was fearfully sublime. He had an extraordinary memory and contrary to the usual methods of civil engineers he made but little use of office records. It was his policy not to issue written orders, and the subordinate who failed to remember his instructions three months after they were verbally given was likely to arouse Peter's profane wrath.

Peter served also as superintendent from October 1, 1869, to October 10, 1870, when he became general manager.

Captain Ellinwood, assistant chief engineer, was another dynamic man of strong personality and extraordinary competency. He surveyed and located the line from Atchison to Larned and was one of those in charge of construction on the scene until 1873.

## GROUND-BREAKING

On September 30, 1868, Peter's assistant chief engineer, Captain John R. Ellinwood, and the latter's assistant, Fred Lord, began surveys on the route south of Topeka. Each day the newspapers waxed more eloquent over the prospects. On October 28 an advertisement in the *Topeka Weekly Record* called for five hundred laborers to work on the new line at \$1.75 per day. The contractor was Dan Blush. Two days later came the real beginning of the Santa Fe. Between Fourth and Fifth on Washington Street in Topeka, Dan threw the first spade of dirt. A small gathering of townspeople and Company officials was present. Holliday took this occasion to forecast again that the time would come when the line would extend to Santa Fe and the Gulf. The consensus termed him a "damned fool"; twenty years later he was to be credited with powers of clairvoyance and an "uncommon amount of common sense." Senator E. G. Ross of Kansas sketched the hectic career of the Company but assured the crowd that the pluck already shown would lead to bigger things.

The decision to build southwest from Topeka rather than from Atchison was prompted by excellent coal deposits near the former. The Kansas Pacific had already built from Kansas City to Topeka on the north side of the Kaw (Kansas River). This necessitated construction of a bridge in order to secure supplies for the line. They were hauled to Topeka over the KP. In the course of the winter both bridge and ten miles of grading were completed. Tracklaying began early in the spring. Late in April seven miles had been laid with 50-pound iron rail. A secondhand locomotive was purchased from the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad and some other used equipment was acquired elsewhere. A celebration was in order. An excursion train consisting of the "new" secondhand locomotive and two coaches (one borrowed) steamed out of Topeka with almost a hundred passengers. The end of the line was reached at the hell-bent speed of fifteen miles per hour over roadbed that was pronounced the best in the prairie country. The party proceeded on foot and in carriages a few miles to Wakarusa, where a picnic was held. There were numerous speeches. Oratory flowed to great heights as liberal quantities of firewater were imbibed. The climax came with Holliday's address. As a rule the Colonel limited likely extension at Santa Fe to the west and the Missouri to the east. On this occasion he loosed all shackles, asserting that the Santa Fe would be built to



Chicago, St. Louis, Galveston, The City of Mexico, and San Francisco. The crowd, although synthetically hyper-receptive, was unable to swallow such fantasy. Loudest to guffaw was Major Tom J. Anderson of the Kansas Pacific.

Anderson later became general passenger agent of the Santa Fe and stayed with the Company until 1881, when prospects for eventual accomplishment of Holliday's assertions at Wakarusa were well on the road to fulfillment.

But everybody had a good time and returned unable to detect any difference between the new line and the New York Central. Two months later the completed mileage had more than doubled on reaching Carbondale; therefore twice as big a celebration was held. By this time the rails had crossed the Shawnee County line, qualifying the Company for a portion of the subsidy bonds that had been voted.

Construction methods were based on brawn plus picks and shovels. Teams, of course, were put to good use. Most of the work was subcontracted, especially the grading.

Among the early contractors who took portions of the work were Craik Bros., Warner and Carpenter, Blackstone and Tolle, George Plumb, and J. D. Criley.

The number of men required was large enough though the topography presented few difficulties. Thousands of man hours were necessary for the most unimposing cuts and fills, without the use of power shovels and dump trucks. Common labor built the railroad. Even the foremen were unskilled if the stories concerning the first tracklaying are true. One Leonard Blood, an inexperienced pint of recent vintage, went to Ashcraft, the boss, and boldly asked for the job of tracklaying foreman.

"Can you do it?" asked the mighty Ashcraft.

"If I can't, fire me," came the reply.

Somehow Blood could until he reached the first curve. There he was stumped.

"I didn't know whether the rails should be sawed or chiseled, so I resorted to diplomacy. There was a big, raw-boned Irishman in the gang, whose good nature had appealed to me, so I took a chance on him.

" 'Full time, Boss, full time it is, Sir,' Mike responded.

" 'Well, Mike, you go ahead and cut them. I have to make a trip up to see the timekeeper.'"

"Mike was flattered by the responsibility reposed in him and went right at the job, while I went up the track a little way and hid behind the pile of ties and watched the proceedings. And the next time we hit a curve I knew how to cut a rail." Although the story has been in the above form for decades, the "curve" was probably a "turnout" or "switch."

Somehow the line advanced, preceded by a substantial boom in real estate. An Emporian wrote to a Topeka paper, June 15, 1869:

Things are lively here. Lots that went begging at \$500.00 three months ago are readily gobbled at \$1000.000 now. About one hundred men are in town awaiting the result of the railroad vote. Had it been adverse they would have ske-daddled tomorrow. As it is, they remain and go to work tomorrow.

The goose was reported "never more loftily suspended."

## FINANCIAL TROUBLES

All was not well backstage. The Associates were having a desperate time with the problem of finance. Although the workers were paid with regularity, there was even betting on default. Officials had to accept bonds in lieu of cash for their salaries, and the bonds were always of doubtful value. Shawnee County bonds with their 7 per cent rate were selling at great discounts. The Associates complained that "... instead of finding a large proportion of the Land subsidy, granted by the State to aid in constructing the Road, . . . we find ourselves entitled only to about four thousand acres, on that portion of the Road now completed, thereby cutting us off from one of our most valuable assets." After completing only twenty-eight miles to Burlingame in 1869, the Associates withdrew, and construction from there was by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad itself. The Associates were paid slightly in excess of \$2,000,000 in par value of securities of doubtful worth in return for the railroad assets. Henry C. Lord relinquished the presidency and the woes it entailed to Henry Keyes, whose rescue of the Connecticut and Passumpsic Rivers Railroad had attracted much attention.

T. J. Peter continued in charge of building operations and pushed ahead to Emporia by July 20, 1870. Grading had been completed well beyond that point, and a sizable stock of iron rail was on hand. The Directors proudly, and perhaps wishfully, asserted,

"Few Western roads are so thoroughly built as this. . . . Stone is freely used in building the road. Equipment . . . is all of the best character. The passenger cars are handsome and commodious; and all pains have been taken to have none but good and serviceable cars and engines on the road." Actually construction was very poor, although less faulty if viewed in the light of the times. There was no ballast. The rails were light and of iron. Made in diverse countries, they were unstandardized. The ties, although untreated, were good, having been sawed or hewn from walnut or white oak. Buildings were of the cheapest wooden construction.

Work beyond Emporia to Florence was soon made possible by the placement of a large block of securities with Kidder, Peabody & Company.

Guiding the fortunes of the Santa Fe at this time was Ginery Twichell. He had accepted the presidency in 1870 and remained in office until May, 1873. Twichell was a self-made man of old American stock. He was born August 22, 1811, at Athol, Massachusetts. He left school at sixteen in favor of a job in a mill. He shifted to a livestock firm and later a store. At nineteen Twichell took charge of a stage line from Barre to Worcester. Soon he became the owner and rapidly outdistanced strong competition. At twenty-nine he controlled many lines through New England. Oddly enough, the secret of his remarkable success was not two-fisted aggressiveness but kindness and generosity. His unusual regard for fair play won many friends. On July 1, 1835, the Boston and Worcester Road was opened. Twichell competed with the new railroad and complemented it until June 1, 1848, when he became assistant superintendent of the line. Again Twichell went to the top and in 1857 the presidency was his. Although he had no penchant for politics, he served three terms as a representative in Congress. The utmost modesty and gentleness characterized his meritorious work.

After leaving the Santa Fe, Twichell headed the Boston, Barre and Garden Road and the Hoosac Tunnel and Western. His great philanthropy was always inconspicuous. He had a phobia about publicity, but his virtues were so many that his friends would not permit him to remain out of the limelight. Twichell was stricken with typhoid fever and died July 23, 1883, in Brookline, Massachusetts.

## ACROSS KANSAS INTO COLORADO

Not only was the line completed to Florence during 1871 but it



was extended to Newton, coming town of cattle, gunplay, sin and eventual respectability.

Most of the towns of the line now west of Emporia were not in existence prior to the advent of the Railroad. The Company laid out and named many of them. As a matter of fact, the whole area was virtually uninhabited except by roving bands of Indians. R. R. Coleman, who assisted in early surveying, recalled:

These operations were slow and more or less dangerous. The weather was hot and travel through the sandhills was tiresome. Much of the journey lay through great herds of buffalo. Stampedes were frequent, and, though the men suffered no injury from this unusual danger, the onrushing beasts occasionally crossed the line of survey. One buffalo was killed each day to supply the camp with fresh meat.

Another menace to work of this nature in southwestern Kansas that summer was Indians. Only two years previously they raided the entire western half of Kansas and had been cowed into a sullen peace by Custer in the battle of Washita eighteen months before. The redskins were nominally quiet and a peace conference was then being held with the Cheyennes and Arapahoes. But these tribes were proverbially treacherous. Even in times of peace they were not indisposed to take advantage of any small detachment that might fall into their power. Consequently the surveyors had an escort of fifteen soldiers, and each civilian was well armed.

Arrival at Newton marked completion of 137 miles of road, scarcely one-fourth of the amount necessary to earn the original land grant. Disaster threatened, for the deadline was March 3, 1873. The Annual Report for the year ending March 3, 1873, tersely presented the problem and its solution:

The western boundary (Kansas-Colorado line) not having been established we estimated the remainder to be built at about three hundred and forty-three miles. The time for the completion of the road and telegraph was limited, and only one year remained. The consequence if it should not be completed within the time would be the loss of a large part of our Land Grant. The advancing cost of raw materials, and rates for money and the fact that five million dollars would have to be raised, presented serious difficulties and embarrassments.

The Report indicated that an attempt was made to get Congress

to extend the time limit but "Congress was preoccupied with a presidential election and the risk of inaction too great." The Board on March 22, 1872, voted to complete the road by the deadline of March 3, 1873. The tight money market and the necessity of haste raised costs somewhat. On December 28, 1872, cars went over the whole, more than two months within the deadline.

... Thus about three hundred and sixty miles were constructed in less than nine months. Moreover the road is remarkably well built, much better than the majority of Western roads, and, in general construction, will bear comparison with the best roads either East or West.

Part of the mileage finished during the year was the long-awaited section between Atchison and Topeka. Faith had been kept with the citizens of Atchison and strategic rail connections were made with the East. Simultaneously a branch was built to Wichita from Newton under the charter of the Wichita and South Western Railway Company. This line was reputed to have been built as an independent venture by T. J. Peter, who had been unable to get fellow directors of the Santa Fe to undertake construction. At any rate, the line was leased to the Santa Fe on completion (for 35 per cent of gross earnings) and eventually consolidated into the system.

The extension west to Colorado followed a route marked out by Captain Ellinwood and A. A. Robinson.

Albert Alonzo Robinson was one of the outstanding men in Santa Fe history. He was born near South Reading, Vermont, October 21, 1844. After the death of his father, Mrs. Robinson remarried and moved to Wisconsin. Albert clerked in his stepfather's store three years until he was seventeen. Illness caused the stepfather to give up the store and Albert undertook to support the family by farming. In the four years which followed Albert established a reputation as a tobacco grower. Reduction was made on the farm mortgage and some capital accumulated. Albert found time to attend a local academy and resolved to attend college. He entered the University of Michigan in 1865, with a backlog of \$175 to finance his college career. Income from part-time jobs and loans from an older brother who was on the Michigan faculty enabled Albert to meet his expenses and he was graduated in the class of 1869. Among the classmates of Robinson were George B. Lake, Thomas J. Seely, and Daniel H. Rhodes. All three of these men were later employed by

Robinson in the service of the Santa Fe. A degree of Master of Science was awarded Robinson in 1871, and in 1900 the University honored him with a degree of Doctor of Laws. His first railroad job was with the St. Joseph and Denver City Railroad in 1869 and was interrupted by leaves of absence for graduate study in Ann Arbor. T. J. Peter added Robinson to the Santa Fe staff on April 1, 1871. Heavy responsibilities were thrust upon his young shoulders but he carried the burden like a veteran. Promotions followed rapidly and he became chief engineer and later vice president and general manager. Under his supervision five thousand miles of the present system were built.

Robinson was not only a man of unimpeachable integrity but one who had the rare ability to impart his virtues to others. Good men were attracted by his magnetic personality and made better by association with him. Only Edward P. Ripley, the great president following the reorganization, compared with Robinson as a mold of men. Robinson more than any other person was responsible for the scandal-free construction history of the Company.

Robinson left the Company when control of the Santa Fe passed temporarily into the hands of financiers whose interests and methods were at variance with the established Santa Fe ways. Offers were legion and he accepted the presidency of the Mexican Central. Between 1893 and 1906, the date of his retirement, mileage was increased and financial solidarity assured.

Twenty-one years after he had severed connections with the Santa Fe (1914), old associates held a banquet in Topeka in his honor. Men came from all parts of the country and messages from far corners of the globe. What better testimony of a man's greatness could be given than an honorary celebration more than two decades after leaving a post!

For a time the Company planned to build west from Wichita, taking a short cut where the Arkansas River veered to the north. The plan was abandoned, and the river was followed on the opposite bank. Although the route was longer, construction was easier. The Santa Fe has been accused of selecting the longer route in order to secure a large grant of land. In all fairness the judgment should be "not guilty." At the time the grant was acquired, the river route was contemplated. Besides, the value of the difference in the grant in 1872 was very little and not to be compared with the difference



in the costs of construction. Beyond Dodge City the routes were identical.

Construction of the extension to Colorado was rather simple. The contractors were Wiley and Cutler, James Preston, Cuning and McIntosh, D. Coleman, and John D. Criley. The latter had helped to build the Kansas Pacific.

The land was relatively flat and there were few curves, cuts, fills, or bridges. In the interests of speed and economy, a minimum of grading was done. Miles of ties and rails were laid right on the prairie. Few station buildings had to be erected, for there were no towns in existence and not many were planned. Notwithstanding the crudity of the line, the limitations in building tools and the absence of machinery necessitated the use of hundreds of laborers. The men were boarded by the Company and bedded wherever the grass was thick and soft. Families were left behind, and the camp was moved five or ten miles at a time as the line progressed. Naturally the camp attracted numerous parasites who supplied such things as were currently desired. Even though the men earned only \$2 per day, pickings were good.

On Saturday nights the construction gang backtracked to the nearest town, where they imbibed heavily and fought with the cowboys who were blowing wages at the end of the great cattle trails. Gambling and women of a less genteel sort were the other attractions. Only a half of a mile of track could be laid on Mondays and at least a mile on any other day.

The Indians caused little trouble. Santa Fe men bore charmed scalps throughout the period of construction. Local Indians either were temporarily peaceful or were engaged in distant wars. Tools were frequently stolen, bridges burned, and small groups of employees chased, but there was no trouble of the sort encountered by the Union Pacific. A rigid guard was maintained around camps and every train was a mobile arsenal. More than once the construction camp was a haven of refuge for hard-pressed traders who chanced along. Shortly after the line was extended twelve miles to Granada, Colorado, in the summer of '73, members of a train crew discovered the bodies of four prospectors along the right of way. They had been robbed and their bodies mutilated.

Building ceased for a couple of years while the Company attempted to assimilate what had already been provided. Other circumstances rendered cessation imperative. Funds of the Company

were low, and the time was not propitious for raising capital. The period prior to 1873 had been one of unbridled expansion and speculation of the sort that characterized the decade following World War I. In September of 1873 the bubble was pricked by the failure of Jay Cooke and Company, backers of the Northern Pacific. Securities and brokers plunged into nose dives. Before the year ended, over five thousand businesses had collapsed. Among these were many railroads and financial houses. The Santa Fe was fortunate to stay afloat, let alone expand.

Another factor which deterred expansion was the terrible grasshopper horde which jumped on Kansas in 1874. Millions of voracious jaws came suddenly out of the west during midsummer. F. W. Giles, Topeka newspaper editor, wrote:

It would tax the powers of an abler writer than this to clearly portray the changes that ensued. The tree yesterday laden with its heavy drapery of green, today denuded. The peach, and pear and apple trees, with luscious fruitage, rejoicing the beholder, today leafless, fruitless, withered as the fig tree accursed. Gardens with lawns and shrubbery and flowers, now lifeless, seared, and fallen to decay. The cottage, embowered, now exposed and blistered by the burning heat of the summer sun. The farmer's fields of ripening grain—his only promise, his only hope—now blackened by the countless myriads of the all-devouring plague—Egypt's dread. A summer scene, in an hour, as it were, transformed to one of winter.

The hoppers were so bad that the driving wheels of the locomotives slipped on starts and on inclines. Sanding the rails did not help. One of the Santa Fe employees, H. V. Faries, master mechanic, finally contrived a brush which was put in front of the wheels to sweep the hoppers off.

News of the visitation to Kansas spread and brought much-needed money for relief but no money for investment. Physical facilities of the Company required what free capital could be scraped up. During 1874, maintenance had cost only \$172.51 per mile. Consequently the line had deteriorated. Superintendent C. F. Morse reported that the rail from Topeka to Emporia was already in need of replacement, that ballasting of cuts was essential, and that both bridges and buildings were in acute disrepair.

In Kansas hope is perennial in the spring, and 1875 brought the renewal of railroad activities. Negotiations had been under way dur-

ing 1873 and 1874 between the Santa Fe and those interested in the Maxwell Land Grant of New Mexico to route the southwest extension of the line from some point in extreme eastern Colorado or southwestern Kansas.

At the helm of the Company during the negotiations was Henry Strong. He was the seventh president of the Santa Fe. Henry Strong was born in Helensburg, Scotland. His father was the Consul General at Glasgow and the family remained abroad until Henry was four. He matured in America and eventually began a legal career at Keokuk and Burlington, Iowa. Like many other Santa Fe officials, Strong spent several years in the service of the Burlington Railroad. His term as president of the Santa Fe lasted from May 22, 1873, to May 28, 1874.

Surveys were made by A. A. Robinson, but the project was abandoned on account of the Panic. Later the Santa Fe was to build into New Mexico but follow a more indirect route.

From Dodge City west to Granada the Santa Fe owned a dead limb. Traffic was light and without immediate prospects of becoming better. Terminating in Granada was literally terminating, and a further extension might turn a liability into an asset. Extensive coal deposits existed in the vicinity of Trinidad and Canon City. Forest resources on the mountain slopes offered lumber traffic to woodless parts of Kansas and materials for the railroad. Mining operations in southern Colorado required transportation for ore, machinery, and supplies. Already Colorado was becoming a mecca for vacationists and was being advertised as the "Switzerland of America." The decision to build had to be made.

Construction west was under the control of the Pueblo and Arkansas Valley Railroad Company. The firm was dominated by Santa Fe backers and was wholly integrated with the policy of the latter.

Affiliated or subsidiary companies are established for diverse reasons. In some cases foreign corporations (those incorporated outside the state of operations) may not hold title to property in certain lines of business. This necessitates incorporation of a local company controlled by the larger concern if operations are to be conducted in the state. Difficulties in financing arising out of the circumscriptions of "after acquired property clauses" in the mortgages of bond issues cause resort to subsidiaries in an effort to expand. There are many other reasons for such corporate complications, but the two mentioned are among the more important.



Las Animas was reached September 13, 1875, La Junta February 16, and Pueblo February 29, 1876.

At Las Animas the Santa Fe encountered bitter opposition from the Kansas Pacific. The Santa Fe, being south of the Kansas Pacific, had wrested the Texas cattle trade from the KP. The latter threatened to parallel the SF to Pueblo and did build to La Junta. The lines were only ten feet apart in places. Later an amicable agreement was made and the KP took up its tracks from Kit Carson to La Junta.

The date for celebrating the completion to Pueblo was set for March 7, and the *Chieftain* announced, "The biggest drunk of the present century will occur here on the 7th of March." An excursion train bringing Santa Fe notables encountered a blizzard near Larned and was unable to get through. After the first round they were never missed.

From *Steel Trails to Santa Fe*, Lawrence, Kansas: copyright 1950 by the University of Kansas Press.

## *Wheels in his Head*

by M. M. MUSSELMAN

[M. M. Musselman is a professional writer for radio and motion pictures. His father, known to the family as A. J., invented, in addition to the successful coaster brake for bicycles, a pneumatic tire for airplanes.]

EVERYBODY, INCLUDING GRANDMA, said A. J. would never amount to anything because he just wouldn't stick to a good job when he had one. In more or less chronological order he was a bicycle racer, hardware buyer, sporting-goods dealer, bicycle salesman, assistant manager of a mail-order house, tire salesman, manufacturer of golf clubs, real-estate subdivider, country-club promoter, research engineer, and gentleman farmer.

In my adolescent days I was always sorry A. J. had not realized his earliest ambition: he wanted to be an acrobat in a circus. He would have been a good one, too. Silk tights and bangles would have suited A. J. It started after Grandma took the boys over to Newton to a little one-ring circus. When they got home to the farm, A. J. tried walking on his hands. After one try he yelled for Grandma to come out and watch him.

"Hey, Ma! Look at me! Look at me!"

Grandma, who was ninety-five pounds of dynamic devotion, came to the screen door to watch A. J. demonstrate on the front porch. He flipped over on his hands and walked right across the porch.

"Carefull!" warned Grandma. "You'll break your neck." And at that moment A. J. walked right off the railless porch and almost did break his neck.

But A. J. was not the least bit discouraged by his first acrobatic misstep. He practiced for weeks until he could stand on his hands, turn handsprings, and do back flips. Then he grew ambitious and wanted to turn somersaults in the air. Not by jumping from a beam in the hayloft; anybody could do that. He wanted to do it just the way the circus acrobats did it: right off the hard ground, with a leap, a cat-like flip, and back on his feet again, finishing with a graceful bow.

He broached the subject to Grandma one morning at breakfast. "Ma," he asked with a speculative gleam in his eye, "how do those circus acrobats learn to turn them somersaults in the air?"

"I don't know," Grandma replied, cutting an apple pie into four sections for her ravenous brood. "But if you dare to try any tomfoolery like that I'll tan your hide. I don't want you abed with broken bones just at haying time."

Grandma should have known better. Any time you dared A. J. to do something, it was as good as done. He went right out behind the barn to give that backward somersault a whirl, feeling somehow that because Grandma had forbidden him to try it, it would be easy as rolling off a log.

He clenched his teeth, leaped into the air, and landed flat on his back. When he regained his breath, he sat up and meditated for several minutes. He had no intention of repeating his experiment. It had been too painful. But he intended to figure out a way to turn somersaults with some degree of safety. All that day, as he took the cows out to pasture, fed the pigs, worked in the hayfield, and helped with the milking, he pondered the safety factor in a backward somersault. At last he solved the problem with a simple but ingenious "invention."

Grandma's clothesline was always stretched between the privy and an old apple tree. A. J. let out enough slack in the line so that it hung down just about waist high. With a short length of rope, he

tied himself to the clothesline and tried a back somersault. To his delight it worked.

He practiced prodigiously for several weeks until he was sure that he was ready to attempt a somersault without the clothesline for a safety belt. Then he went out behind the barn to try it, but to his chagrin he discovered that he lacked the nerve. The memory of that first painful effort still haunted him, and he realized that he had become a slave to his safety belt. In later years A. J. told me this story many times and always pointed out the obvious moral.

"Some people go through life wearing a safety belt," he would say. "Never get up nerve enough to take a chance; stick to the same job all their life; live in the same little one-horse town; wear rubbers on rainy days; never eat oysters out of season; never kiss anybody but their wife; vote the straight Republican ticket; and then discover it's all over but the flowers and the funeral and they never had any fun out of life."

But A. J. was not long a slave to his safety belt. One morning, trudging back from the pasture, he determined to take just one more practice somersault, tied to the clothesline; and then, come what might, he would give it a whirl on his own.

Hurrying to the clothesline, he tied himself firmly in position and gave a confident leap into the air. For some reason he turned only halfway over. Fortunately the clothesline caught the weight of his body and saved his neck. But the weatherbeaten privy, to which the line was attached, could not take it. With a wooden groan it collapsed. Simultaneously, there was a scream from Grandma, who at that moment was occupying the second hole.

For an instant she sat frozen amid the ruins, her Scotch Presbyterian blood horrified by this intrusion on her privacy. Then, with fire in her eye, she dropped her skirts and started for A. J. This was one time when he could not escape Grandma's wrath, for he was still tied to the clothesline.

But A. J. was not to be deterred from his career as an acrobat. He kept on turning cartwheels and back flips and somersaults. He built a horizontal bar out behind the barn, on which to try new tricks. His three brothers were satisfied when they could chin themselves a few times and "skin the cat." Not A. J. He kept fooling around on that bar until he was as much at home on it as a monkey.

Some years later, A. J. became a Y.M.C.A. physical director on the strength of a couple of back flips and a giant swing, which was



the closest he ever came to being a bona fide acrobat. But I used to brag to the neighbor kids that Pop was a circus performer—the man on the flying trapeze. If they doubted it, I would yell for him to come out and show them. A. J. would come out in the yard and turn somersaults and back flips till the other kids were popeyed. They thought a circus acrobat was about the greatest kind of dad any boy could have. I would not have told them the truth for a million dollars—that he was really an inventor.

Grandma had been left a widow with a farm to run and four sons to rear, the eldest twelve years old, all of whom, it was whispered among the neighbors, were slightly tetchd. But Grandma thought they were just plain lazy. She'd send them out to pick the cherries in the orchard and they'd come in that evening and declare the trees were stripped. But next morning, when Grandma would go out to see for herself, she'd find the boys had lied to her; they hadn't picked half the cherries. The same thing would happen when they'd go out to pick apples.

"Never would pick 'em all," Grandma used to declare. "And then lie about it like little heathens!"

A. J. was the worst. He used to argue back at Grandma. Down-right sass her. Then Grandma would get angry, grab her hickory switch, and chase them up into those trees again. But it never did any good.

It was not till thirty years later that Grandma heard about color-blindness. All four of her boys had it—couldn't tell red from green.

"Probably a good thing," Grandma philosophized when she found out why the boys never picked all the cherries. "They needed a certain amount of lickin' anyway."

Even as a boy, back on the farm, A. J. had a passion for things that went round and round. Wheels! Anything with wheels attached to it started him off on a mental tangent. An unattached wheel would leave him in a state of suspended animation, while he gawked at it with a dreamy, speculative expression.

A. J.'s first invention was inspired by a huge wheel from an old high-wheeled bicycle. He purloined it from a junk heap behind the village blacksmith shop, brought it home, and went to work on it. In the barn he found a long axle and a couple of old buggy shafts. These he attached in their proper places; then he hung a home-made seat on either side of the wheel.

This uni-sulky, as A. J. has always called it, had several remarkable features. In the first place, it could operate only if there were two occupants of about the same weight, and they had to jump into their seats at the same time in order to keep the contraption balanced. Secondly, the occupants had to crouch low in their seats to keep from bumping their heads against the axle, from which the seats were suspended. Third, it required two drivers—one to hold the left rein, the other to hold the right. Any difference of judgment between them was likely to result in trouble.

A. J. and his brother Joe chose a Sunday morning, about an hour before church time, to try out the wonderful uni-sulky. Dressed in their best, they led old Bill, the work mule, out of the barn and backed him between the shafts. Then, with youthful nimbleness and enthusiasm, they jumped into their seats and urged Bill out onto the road, in order to get out of Grandma's sight as quickly as possible.

It was probably the most amazing vehicle ever seen on a Kansas highway. And remarkably enough, everything went well for about half a mile, until they came to the main road into town. There, A. J. chose to turn right while his brother Joe preferred to go left. Both being of a stubborn nature, neither would compromise.

Now it happened that Bill was a precocious animal. A. J. has always claimed that he was smarter than most human beings and meaner than Simon Legree. Anyway, Bill became annoyed at the difference of opinion behind him, gave a jerk of his head, and craned his neck around to see what in hell was going on. One look at the contraption to which he was hitched convinced him that he was pulling the devil's own chariot. He gave a snort and set out across country at top speed.

There has always been a difference of opinion between A. J. and Uncle Joe as to exactly what happened. But it seems that as Bill dragged the uni-sulky through the ditch at the side of the road, each boy dropped his rein and grabbed his seat. After that Bill was on his own. He went through Ed Beem's cornfield like Greyhound out to break all records at Goshen. Then he turned south and leaped a barbed-wire fence into Ham Turner's watermelon patch. It was at this fence that Uncle Joe was unseated and hung up by his breeches.

Without Uncle Joe, the wonderful uni-sulky veered to starboard like a catboat in a high wind, causing Bill to run in circles. A. J.

held on for dear life, bouncing over green watermelons so fast he felt he was riding the Santa Fe ties to Wichita.

Somewhere in the backstretch, the sulky seat broke from its moorings and took a hop, skip, and jump which landed A. J. amid a tangle of vines. By the time he had freed himself, caught his breath, and stood up to look around, Bill was just vaulting another fence, with what was left of the uni-sulky still dragging along behind him. He disappeared in the general direction of California.

Long-suffering Grandma, dressed in her black dress and bonnet, was rocking grimly on the front porch when the boys finally hove into view. She took one look at their tattered Sunday best and reached for her hickory switch.

It was late afternoon before they found Bill, grazing peacefully, down by the river. The uni-sulky was no longer attached to him. A. J. spent many days searching for the remains, but he never found them.

A man who invents a novel and useful device or process may apply for and be granted a patent from the United States government giving him a monopoly of his invention for seventeen years. Inventors sometimes become very wealthy, but more often they go bankrupt. For many years A. J. danced a jig between the two, but in the end, to everyone's amazement, he did all right.

The first invention on which he was granted a patent was a game, called "Parlor Golf," which he sold to Parker Brothers for one hundred dollars, spot cash. When he invented it, A. J. had never seen a game of golf. But apparently neither had Parker Brothers, for the game resembled golf about as much as Paris, Illinois, resembles that other and more famous Paris.

The idea of the game was to flick a marble, with thumb and forefinger, up a series of nine grooved and undulated inclines, into nine little holes. In all Wichita, where A. J. by this time owned a bicycle repair shop, he was the only person who had the patience or skill to accomplish this feat in less than par. Everyone else grew infuriated at the damned thing and gave up, leaving A. J. the first undisputed Western Open Golf Champion (Parlor Division).

There followed a number of remarkable inventions, all of which, for one reason or another, failed to produce quick riches. Many of them were contrived while he was operating a bicycle shop in Wichita.

The Tearless Onion Peeler was a gadget that should have been a



welcome addition to every kitchen. It was an affair of wheels and knives with a crank to operate it. For large consumers of onions, such as hotels and restaurants, A. J. devised a model which had a foot treadle for motive power. With this super-gadget one man (or woman) could peel, A. J. estimated roughly, seven bushels of onions per hour, without shedding a single tear. And by a simple adjustment, the machine could be converted to a potato, apple, peach, turnip, or rutabaga peeler. In those days, however, labor was plentiful and cheap; consequently, manufacturers of kitchen implements were of the unanimous opinion that A. J.'s Tearless Onion Peeler was no substitute for a ten-cent paring knife.

"It was a good invention," A. J. once told me, "but nobody wanted to buy it. That's always been the trouble with the world. People are suspicious of new ideas. If you spend one year inventing something new, you have to spend two years cramming it down people's throats. There are lots of easier ways to get rich."

After the Tearless Onion Peeler, A. J. invented his Wind-Proof Umbrella. "It Can't Blow Inside Out," read the prospectus. A. J. was sure he had a winner. Every household needed an umbrella, more especially one that would not collapse at the first gust of wind. And certainly rain was usually accompanied by wind; at least it was in Kansas. He figured that if he could collect a royalty of five cents on each umbrella, he ought to make a million dollars in five years.

At the time he perfected the new umbrella, he was enamored of a girl in Wichita, whose name, according to Aunt Ora, was Bertha. A. J. told Bertha about his newest invention. She listened with round-eyed admiration and assured him, breathlessly, that he must be the cleverest man in Wichita. And would he, pretty please, give her one of his patent umbrellas when he became a famous millionaire?

A. J. didn't wait to become a millionaire. He rushed right down to Innes's Department Store and bought a lady's silk umbrella, priced at three dollars. Then he took it to his shop and rebuilt it, with the crossbracing, truss arrangement which was the feature of his Wind-Proof Umbrella.

On Bertha's birthday he presented it to her. For a week or so, Bertha displayed her umbrella proudly, and A. J. was elevated to the position of chief swain in her retinue of admirers. And then the rains came.

It happened while Bertha was on her way downtown, clad in a

new spring outfit. The sky was slightly overcast, so she was carrying her Patented Wind-Proof Umbrella. When the first drops fell, Bertha struggled with the mechanism of the Wind-Proof Umbrella and finally opened it. Then she slipped her hand through the umbrella's stout wrist-loop, grasped the handle, and quickened her pace, feeling completely secure beneath her Wind-Proof Umbrella.

Suddenly the rain began to slant; overhead, tree branches bent and groaned as a rush of wind struck them; and the sky turned a threatening yellowish gray. Bertha stopped in her tracks. She had lived in Kansas all her life and she knew what was coming: a Kansas tornado. The wind filled her umbrella and tried to tear it from her grasp. The loop tightened about her wrist. She and the umbrella were swept along like two chips on a torrent. By the time she piled up against the Onderdonks' picket fence, bruised, battered, and humiliated, the romance between Bertha and the inventor of the Patented Wind-Proof Umbrella was forever ended.

All A. J.'s most successful inventions seemed to stem from that huge wheel which was the inspiration for his uni-sulky: they were things that went round and round. The invention of which he is proudest is his method for making the tires now used on airplanes, farm tractors, and other vehicles. This invention created a new principle in tire construction, by means of which the cross-section could be nearly as great as one-half the diameter, resulting in very low air pressures. These tires make it possible for planes to land or take off on rough or muddy fields; they also reduced ground looping and eliminated crack-ups due to wheel failure. Unfortunately, he sold his patent before anyone could foresee the enormous production of planes that World War II would bring. The invention which has brought him the greatest financial return is his bicycle coaster brake.

"I got the idea for my bicycle coaster brake back in 1894," A. J. always begins one of his best stories. "It was while I was traveling about ninety miles an hour down the slopes of the Rockies on a bicycle."

As A. J. tells the story, he unlocked his bicycle shop one July morning and discovered that the window on the alley was standing wide open. Then he noticed that his pride and joy, a red and white Peerless bicycle, the latest thing in cycledom, was missing. It was the most expensive one in the store—priced at \$125. The plush-lined

case, for shipping via railroad, was undisturbed, so A. J. knew that the thief had ridden his loot away.

He hurried over to the police station, where inquiry revealed that a stranger, who had skipped out of the local hotel without paying his bill, had been seen the night before, by Patrolman Murphy, high-tailing toward Hutchinson on the Peerless.

A. J. was fit to be tied. "Why didn't Murphy pinch the fellow?" he demanded. "That was the only red and white Peerless bike in Wichita and everybody knew it belonged to me."

The Chief of Police shrugged. "Maybe Murphy thought the guy had bought it."

A. J. hurried over to the bank and drew out twenty dollars for expense money, then dashed back to his store, shouted to Aunt Ora that he was on the trail of a bicycle thief, and climbed on his Ariel road-racer.

As A. J. likes to point out, he was pretty sharp on a bicycle in those days—an amateur circuit racer and one of the best riders west of the Mississippi. He thought he could overtake the bike-rustler before nightfall, because the red and white Peerless was bound to attract attention.

But he soon discovered that his quarry was a fast rider himself. For when he arrived at Great Bend, about nine o'clock that night, the Peerless had been there and gone. A. J. started out next morning at daybreak, hoping to overtake the bike-snatcher before he lost the trail. He was at a disadvantage, of course, because he had to stop at every crossroad and make inquiries; but the trail stayed hot—as A. J. says, "hotter'n an iron pump handle in August."

The second afternoon, he arrived at a fly-infested lunchroom, where he ordered a sandwich and inquired about the man on the Peerless.

"Yeah," answered the proprietor. "There was a fellow come through here on a bike like that."

"How long ago?"

"Couple hours. Told me he was headin' fer Colorado Springs. Purty long ride, if you ask me."

A. J. didn't wait to finish his sandwich. He hit the road and settled down to ride his fox to earth. He claims that was the best race he ever pedaled in his life, but somehow the thief evaded him. He thinks the man may have bribed a brakeman on a freight train to give him and the Peerless a lift in an empty boxcar.



A. J. reached Colorado Springs early one morning. As soon as the stores were open he canvassed every bicycle shop in town, but nobody had seen the Peerless. As a last resort he went to the police station.

"Saw a fellow ridin' a bike toward Cripple Creek this morning," one of the cops told him.

"Was it a red and white Peerless?"

"Didn't notice."

A. J. took a chance and headed for Cripple Creek. He had never seen mountains before and hadn't the vaguest idea what he was in for. The last ten miles into the little mining town were so steep he had to get off and push. As he plugged up those weary miles, he had an uncomfortable feeling that he had been sent on a wild-goose chase. Sure enough, nobody in Cripple Creek had seen the Peerless.

A. J. was a very unhappy man—tired, defeated, six hundred miles from home, and with only six dollars left. His one consoling thought was that he would be able to coast all the way back to Colorado Springs and a bed.

So he climbed on his bicycle and started, with never a thought of more trouble ahead. But before he was half a mile out of town he realized that he was traveling too fast. For although the Cripple Creek road didn't look so steep, it was something like the first dip on a roller coaster. He tried to slow down by throwing his weight against the pedals, but he kept gaining speed and was heading down that road faster than a hound dog with a hive of bees on his tail.

In those days a cyclist used to brake his bicycle by slipping one toe under the frame and pressing on the front tire with the sole of his shoe. A. J. tried that. For a moment it worked; then friction made the sole of his shoe fiery hot. He let out a startled yell and jerked his foot from beneath the frame.

Then gravity took charge once more and away he went. It was time to think of something ingenious. But the only idea he could contrive was to fall off. He hit the dirt with a thud that knocked the wind out of him; in one bounce he was off the road and rolling down the mountainside. He fetched up against a scrub pine fifty feet from the road.

For a minute or two he just lay there regaining his wind and wondering if he was all in one piece. Then he got up groggily and shook his head until the world came back into focus. He scrambled up to the road and looked about for the bicycle. It was not in sight.

After an extensive search, he found his bicycle with eight spokes

broken and the frame bent. When it would run again, he sat down to think.

His pondering resulted in the invention of his first brake. He cut several pine branches and tied them into a bundle with a piece of rope from his tool kit. The end of the rope was then attached to his saddle post so that the pine branches dragged behind on the road.

It worked like a charm. The bundle of branches was just enough brake to keep things under control. He went down the mountain road throwing up a dust cloud big enough for thirty head of cattle.

For about six miles A. J. was mighty proud of his invention; then, to his dismay, he discovered that it was an infringement. He was informed of this fact by a deputy sheriff who halted him with a forty-four and a vocabulary of four-letter words.

Using a drag for a brake was old stuff in those parts. Wagon freighters had invented the device years before. The trouble was that it ruined good roads, so the state had passed a law against that invention. A. J. had to wire back to Wichita for money to pay his fine.

"And that's one reason," A. J. has often told me, "that I conceived the idea of putting a coaster brake on a bicycle."

The idea was a long time hatching. It was thirteen years before he applied for a patent. But since 1908 five million bicycles have been equipped with A. J.'s coaster brake. Even Grandma had to admit, before she died, that somehow "one of Alvey's fool inventions turned out purty good." . . .

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# VI.

## End of the Cattle Trail

*With the building of the railroads the great cattle trade became a reality in Kansas and laid the foundation for the state's one bit of Hollywood romance, which found expression in the dime novels of an earlier day. Abilene, Ellsworth, Newton, Dodge City, Wichita, all at one time or another enjoyed the distinction of being the epitome of murder and sudden death. There the cowboy and his jingling spurs, his wide-brimmed hat, his six-shooter, his enormous saddle, his money, and his sin met the painted lady and shot it out with his rival or the regulator of the peace. Thus Wild Bill, Buffalo Bill, Buckskin Bill, et cetera, became the stuff which went into books that youngsters kept hid under their pillows. On the other hand, the cowboy and the cattle trade had a side worthy of a serious historian.*

### *Cattle-Trails of the Prairies*

by CHARLES M. HARGER

[Charles M. Harger became editor of the *Abilene Reflector* in 1898; and thereafter until his death, he devoted his life to newspaper and magazine work and the promotion of public-service institutions. He was an early instructor in journalism at the University of Kansas.]

IN 1860, TEXAS, as it had been for many years before, was the chief producer of live-stock in the Western States. Upon all its widespread ranges were feeding herds by the thousand, and no other industry approached that of cattle-raising in importance or extent. The few hundred thousand cattle of Spanish blood which had been placed there during the State's life as a Mexican province, were multiplied until three and a half million head were estimated as Texas's belongings. They had been somewhat improved in breed, but were still wiry, nervous, long-limbed creatures, with slender, branching horns and restless eyes. They could run like deer, and were almost as wild.

The peculiarly favorable climate of Texas gave the State almost a monopoly of the business. The pastures were green the year around, and the proximity to market, either at points on the Mississippi River, to which herds from the eastern part of the State could easily



be driven, or by water from points on the Gulf, gave a distinct advantage. Mexico had in times past been a valuable consumer, but was now nearly deserted, and the nearer selling-places were able to handle the supply. The fine, hair-like "buffalo grass" that covers the prairies for four hundred miles east of the mountains, and wherever found is as nourishing in winter as in summer, flourished in abundance, and the mesquite was not to be despised as a change of diet for the herds.

The outbreak of the war brought upon the ranch-owners a peculiar embarrassment of riches. With the Northern market cut off, and Southern business life demoralized, no disposition could be made of the rapidly increasing herds. Occasional fugitive sales along the Mississippi became almost the only markets. Prices declined, and for a time two to four dollars a head would purchase the best animals on the ranges. Driving northward had not been much practised, and now, with the sharp skirmishing along the Kansas and Missouri frontier, there was no opportunity to begin it. Stock was neglected as valueless. Men were "cattle-poor," and it was a time of discouragement to those who had looked for fortunes in their enterprises.

In 1865 and 1866 the ranch-owners determined to seek Northern markets at any cost, and thousands of animals were massed in the northeast portion of the State preparatory to driving to Missouri railroad stations. The summer of 1866 saw this movement begin. Fully two hundred and seventy thousand head were pushed northward. There was little regularity in the courses taken. The Rock Bluffs ford, on the Red River, was the starting place for many. Up the Kinishi Valley, across the plains to Fort Smith, Ark., then, with a circuitous route among the Ozarks, across southeastern Missouri—that was the line most followed.

But a new danger threatened. There had ensconced themselves among the wilder regions of southern Missouri and northern Arkansas bands of outlaws, legitimate successors to the guerrillas of war days, who by mere force of advantageous position levied unmerciful tribute upon all drovers passing through their territory. The tax was an oppressive one, and no matter how shrewd were the movements of the herders, the unwieldy masses of animals were sure to be detected. Should the demands of the outlaws not be acceded to, the drover was in many instances subjected to bodily punishment. At the same time one of the persecutors would ride furiously at the herd, swinging a colored blanket. The timid beeves,

bewildered by the unwonted sight, would scurry in every direction, becoming more frightened as they ran, until the herd would be scattered over miles of territory. Days and weeks of search on the part of the cowboys, as the herders who assisted the drover were called, would serve to secure only a portion of the lot.

Fear of Spanish fever was made the pretext for other delays, while the hostility of the Cherokee Indians in the northeastern part of the Indian Territory shut off a more westerly route to avoid the bandits. Many head of cattle were lost on the way by reason of the toilsome track through the Ozark Mountains, and the remainder reached markets in St. Louis and Sedalia in poor condition and brought low prices. The year's drive was discouraging and unprofitable to the Texas cattle-barons, and many plans were considered for the disposition of the constantly growing surplus. Northern prices for good stock were flattering; capital was ready for investment in the business; nothing was needed but an outlet for the abundance of beef.

The solution of the problem confronting the cattle-raisers came through the construction of the railroads across Kansas. In 1867 the old Kansas Pacific Railroad, now the Kansas Division of the Union Pacific, was being built from Kansas City along the valley of the Kaw due west across the State. It had reached half way from the Missouri to the mountains before the possibilities it offered became apparent. The country traversed was but sparsely settled; the towns consisted for the most part of a few rude cabins, including the inevitable saloon. But the tide of emigration was pushing westward, and there was a magnificent empire for it to conquer.

One of the first comers was an Illinois stock-dealer, Joseph G. McCoy, to whom is due the honor of originating the Kansas and Texas cattle-trails. He was familiar with the situation in the Lone Star State, and conceived the idea of forming a great shipping-point on the new railroad. He was encouraged by the officials, and arrangements were made for the location of the proper yards at Abilene, a station one hundred and sixty-five miles from Kansas City, situated in the midst of a richly-grassed prairie section, admirably adapted for grazing grounds of incoming herds. The town had less than a dozen houses, and was within less than thirty miles of the end of the road, as then completed. Yards were built and steps were taken to induce the cattlemen to make this a point from which to ship their herds.

A single horseman was despatched on a lonely ride across Indian-infested prairies to send every herd he could encounter to the new shipping-place. He went southwest, crossing the Arkansas River near the site of the present city of Wichita, thence to the Indian Territory. It was some time before he found any of the straggling herds, and when he did he could with difficulty induce the drovers to believe that they would be treated with respect and fairness, so used were they to the violence of the old course. However, many were convinced, and a herd of nearly two thousand head, belonging to some Californians, was the first to break the northern end of a trail over which so many million restless hoofs were destined to travel. About thirty-six thousand cattle, one per cent, of Texas's supply, reached Abilene that season, and every drover went back well pleased with the facilities afforded. The first shipment from Abilene was made September 5, 1867, and was celebrated by an excursion of Illinois stockdealers coming in a special train to see the start. Money was lost on the year's business, both from damage to the droves by floods and Indian raids, and because of the prejudice in the East against Texas beef, then considered by many too wild for use.

The movement was started, and 1868 saw a general friendliness for the new market among Texas stock-owners, and a northward drive that exceeded seventy-five thousand head. But the succeeding year, 1869, showed a greater increase, and one hundred and sixty thousand cattle came tramping up like a horned army from the ranches of the South.

By this time well-defined trails had been located, and for two decades those trunk-lines connecting the great producing and consuming points held their supremacy. The most famous of these was the "Chisholm Trail." It was named after John Chisholm, an eccentric frontier stockman, who was the first to drive over it. Chisholm lived at Paris, Texas, was a bachelor, and had many thousand head of cattle on the ranges in the southern part of the State. Later he removed to New Mexico, and died a few years ago, leaving almost uncounted droves upon his ranches. There was through Texas, reaching down from the Red River, the irregular "Southern Texas Trail," ending at the north near Cooke County. From the Red River, Chisholm broke the way to Kansas, riding ahead of his herd and selecting what seemed the most favorable route. He forded the Red River near the mouth of Mud Creek, to the west of Signal Mountains, and



crossed the Washita at Elm Spring. Due north took him to the Canadian River, after leaving which he soon struck the Kingfisher Creek Valley. This was followed to the Cimarron. Touching the head of Black Bear and Bluff Creeks, its next considerable stream was the Salt fork of the Arkansas, which was crossed at Sewell's Ranch. Sewell was a Government post-trader, who was a favorite with the Indians, and had two large ranches in the Territory. Coming into Kansas near Caldwell, the course was a little east of north, crossing the Arkansas near Wichita. Here was the famous "First and Last Chance" saloon, with its sign-board facing two ways to attract the cow-boys coming up across the Territory and those returning from market. Thence the trail turned northeasterly, striking Newton, and so on over the divide between the Smoky Hill and the Arkansas to the prairies south of Abilene. Following Chisholm's track came thousands of herds, and the trail became a notable course.

From two hundred to four hundred yards wide, beaten into the bare earth, it reached over hill and through valley for over six hundred miles ( including its southern extension), a chocolate band amid the green prairies, uniting the North and South. As the marching hoofs wore it down and the wind blew and the waters washed the earth away it became lower than the surrounding country and was flanked by little banks of sand, drifted there by the wind. Bleaching skulls and skeletons of weary brutes who had perished on the journey gleamed along its borders, and here and there was a low mound showing where some cow-boy had literally "died with his boots on." Occasionally a dilapidated wagon-frame told of a break-down, and spotting the emerald reaches on either side were the barren circle-like "bedding grounds," each a record that a great herd had there spent a night.

The wealth of an empire passed over the trail, leaving its mark for decades to come. The traveller of to-day sees the wide trough-like course, with ridges being washed down by the rains, and with fences and farms of the settlers and the more civilized red-men intercepting its track, and forgets the wild and arduous life of which it was the exponent. It was a life now outgrown, and which will never again be possible.

Dividing honors with the Chisholm was the "Old Shawnee Trail." This led to the lesser Northern shipping-point, opened about the same time as Abilene—Baxter Springs. This city was on the then just completed Fort Scott & Gulf Railroad, and was located in the

southeastern corner of Kansas. The trail left the Red River near Snivel's Bend, about forty miles east of the starting-point of the older course, and ran nearly parallel with its rival for about a hundred miles. Here was a connecting trail running into the Chisholm at Elm Spring. The Shawnee then bore northeasterly on the north side of the Shawnee Hills, crossed the Canadian and North Canadian near the Sac and Fox Agency, then passing through the Creek reservation forded the Arkansas west of Forts Davis and Gibson. Turning more easterly, it passed west of Vinita and so on to Baxter Springs. This trail, called from its passing through the Shawnee Indian country, became as well worn as the older one and was equally well-known. Both were barren as city streets and were marked by the whitening bones of four-footed travellers who had died on their weary journey.

Between the two main trails was the "Middle" or "West Shawnee Trail," leaving its namesake near the Canadian and going nearly due north until it struck the Arkansas, up which valley it followed into Kansas. Up the Whitewater Valley, then north and east, crossing the Cottonwood and along the Neosho and Clark's Creek valleys, ending at Junction City, twenty-five miles east of Abilene. In later years the Chisholm trail gave off a western shoot which left it near Elm Spring, and passing near Fort Reno, went on northwest into western Kansas, striking Dodge City on the Arkansas, also northeast to Ellsworth, on the Smoky Hill. With the settling up of the country, cattle were driven farther and farther west, until this "Western Chisholm Trail" came to be the chief thoroughfare for herds destined either for market directly or for maturing in the bracing air and rich pastures of Wyoming and Montana.

Individual drovers often varied their course from the beaten roads, but for the most part the traffic of the cattle days followed the greater lines as the bulk of commercial shipments is now made over a few prominent railroads.

Along the trails ranches were started, where lands could be secured on either side suitable for the purpose, and northern Texas, southern and western Kansas, and later on portions of the Indian Territory, rivalled the Gulf region in the production of marketable animals.

The number of cattle reaching Abilene in 1870 bounded to three hundred thousand, and almost a continuous line of bovine travellers

was pouring over the Chisholm Trail. In order to facilitate the herds' movements surveyors were sent out to straighten the trail from the point where it entered Kansas to the shipping-station. Fresh mounds of earth were thrown up to mark the route, and the drovers found considerable saving in distance. They spread the news of the efforts being made to accommodate the cattlemen, and the Texas ranch-owners, appreciating these advantages as well as the rapidly increasing prices of stock in the Eastern markets, prepared to send forward still greater supplies.

The ranches were, for the most part, in southern and southwestern Texas, and the hundreds of young men who at the close of the war had sought fortune in the far Southwest were just coming into a position to put some of their salable stock on the market. In 1871 nearly a million cattle were driven north. Six hundred thousand came to Abilene alone, while Baxter Springs and Junction City received half as many. For miles around the chief shipping points the stock was herded awaiting a chance to sell or ship. From any knoll could be seen thousands of sleek beeves, their branching horns glistening in the sunlight and their herders watchfully riding in the distance. Several counties of central Kansas were practically turned into cattle-yards, and it seemed that the industry would soon absorb the energies of the entire State.

But it was the height of the wave. Prices fell off; wet weather and cold winds injured the cattle's condition, and the so-called Spanish fever, always a terror to the Northerners, and which seemed ineradicable from the Texas cattle's blood, was causing more trouble than usual. The herds were held on the grazing grounds until fall, in the hope of better prices, but to no purpose. Finally, shipping was stopped entirely, and over three hundred thousand cattle were unsold. Every year there had been some carried over, either because of their being unsalable, or, as has been so general in late years, to fatten on the Northern corn; but this number was unprecedented. The drovers took their stock westward to the buffalo grass region, it being impossible to procure hay and corn in central Kansas for the great throng.

At the beginning of winter (1871-72) came a storm of sleet, putting an icy coat over the sod; and multiplied thousands of cattle and hundreds of horses died of cold and starvation. Some of the carcasses were skinned, but the majority were left for food for the wolves. A hundred thousand hides were shipped from three stations



after the storm. The winter was severe throughout, and it was estimated that less than fifty thousand cattle lived through it. From herds of sixty and seventy thousand, only a few hundred survived. Like other booms in which the West has overreached itself, this one had its collapse.

Abilene's prestige was gone. Ellsworth, forty miles further west, became the shipping point on the Kansas Pacific. The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad being nearly completed through the southern portion of the State, began to compete for the trade. Newton, where the road crossed the trail to Abilene, stopped many of the herds, and with Ellsworth divided the claim to the title Abilene had held for several years, "The wickedest town in the West." This description was afterward appropriated by Dodge City, and then, with the opening of the mining regions of Colorado, passed from the State and became the property of Leadville and Deadwood. It was of the new shipping-point that another picturesque saying became popular, "There is no Sunday west of Newton and no God west of Pueblo." Wichita, too, claimed attention from the drovers, and eighty thousand head went from there in 1872, while three times as many were shipped from the other towns combined. In 1873 four hundred and fifty thousand head were shipped from Kansas, and then again came a back-set in prices and weather conditions, but not equal to that of two years previous.

Soon after, Dodge City, on the Chisholm trail's western offshoot to Ellsworth, being reached by the Santa Fe, took the more northern station's trade as Newton had absorbed Abilene's, and for twelve years was the acknowledged shipping centre for Texas cattle in the State. While the drives never reached such proportions as in 1871, they continued to be extensive until the building of the railroads across the Indian Territory and the establishment of shipping points in Texas itself. Even then they did not wholly cease, and many thousand head came straggling across the line each year, being marketed at Dodge City, Wichita, or other railroad points.

The opening of Oklahoma, in 1890, made another barrier, however, and the season of 1891 saw the last of the bovine exodus that through more than two decades had furnished employment and profit for a large portion of the West's workers. Neither advantage nor convenience is now found in that method of marketing, and henceforth the only herds to wind their slow length over the once populous thoroughfares will be the young stock taken leisurely

through the season from the warm climate of the Gulf region up northwesterly, skirting the foot-hills of the Rockies, to reach, after a six months' journey, the highland feeding grounds of Wyoming and Montana. A year or two later they will go to market, sturdy and hard-fleshed beeves, ready for the export trade.

The task of the drover and his assistant cow-boys in getting the herds from the Southern ranches to the Northern shipping points was one involving both skill and daring. Only a man of unflinching courage and quick movement could succeed in handling animals whose characteristics were rather those of the wild beast than of the creature bred for the sustenance of man. The Texas steer is no respecter of persons. For the man on horseback he has a wholesome fear; he seems to have something of the savage's conceit that the combination is irresistible. Separately, neither man nor horse has any more chance in a herd fresh from the range than among so many wolves or jackals. With their long, sharp-pointed horns these steers rend an enemy with ease, and the fights among themselves have all the ferociousness of contests in the jungle.

The first contact between the cow-boys and the cattle is at the annual round-up, when the whole territory over which the owner's herds range is gone over and the cattle gathered for branding. The offspring are given the mark of the mother, and the ranch-owner possesses a brand as exclusively as does a manufacturer a trade-mark. After the young have been lassoed, held, and had their flesh burned with the red-hot branding iron, leaving a scar in the form of a letter, figure, or combination design that will last for life, they are turned loose and no human hand is laid on them until they become "beeves," that is, four years old and ready for market. The cow-boys live in cabins near the water-courses and watch the stock from day to day, sometimes having the herds ten or twenty miles away. Should any "mavericks," that is, unbranded stock over one year old, get with the herd, they become the property of the person branding them, hence no inconsiderable addition is frequently made to a herd by this means.

The cattle-barons in the palmy days of the cattle trade lived like princes. They did not reside on the ranch, but in some of the Texas cities, or spent their time in luxurious traveling while their wealth increased at a ratio beyond their capacity for spending it. Many of them did not know how many cattle they owned. Their career was

one of extravagance and display. Diamonds, carriages, and banquets made their life brilliant while it lasted. When, in the later 70's and the early part of the decade following, their power and wealth were at the highest point, they practically owned the Lone Star State. From No Man's Land to El Paso their cattle grazed; prices were high and capital was flowing in for investment. But the agriculturist came, too, and farms drove out the ranches.

The first owners did not always send the cattle to market. Drovers made a business of going from ranch to ranch and purchasing the marketable beeves. "Dogies," "sea-lions," and "long-horns" were favorite nicknames for the cattle, and size as well as title depended on the latitude. The southern Texas stock was smaller, and from four to six thousand were driven at a time. Of northern Texas stock fifteen hundred to three thousand made a good-sized "drive."

The drover secured, besides camp equipage and eatables, about eight men to the thousand cattle as drivers, and from six to ten horses to the man, according to the quality of the equines. After 1883-84, when Indians were less dangerous and fewer herds were on the trails, four to six men to the thousand head were considered sufficient. Having "cut out" the cattle one by one with lassoes (long rawhide ropes attached to the cow-boys' saddles and thrown with great accuracy by the riders), the steers and cows all received a "road brand," a supplementary mark to prevent confusion on the way to market. All was then ready for the long march.

Spring was the usual starting time, and during the seasons of the large drives, May, June, July, and August saw almost a solid procession passing over the great trails. So near were the herds that the drivers could hear one another urging along the stock, and frequently even the utmost care could not prevent two companies stampeding together, entailing a loss of much time and labor in separating them.

Once started, it was remarkable the orderly manner in which a herd took its way across the plains. A herd of a thousand beeves would string out to a length of two miles, and a larger one still longer. It made a picturesque sight. The leaders were flanked by cow-boys on wiry Texas ponies, riding at ease in great saddles with high backs and pommels. At regular distances were other riders, and the progress of the cavalcade was not unlike that of an army on a march. There was an army-like regularity about the cattle's movements, too. The leaders seemed always to be especially fitted for the place, and the same ones would be found in the front rank through-



out the trip; while others retained their relative positions in the herd day after day.

At the start there was hard driving, twenty to thirty miles a day, until the animals were thoroughly wearied. After that twelve to fifteen miles was considered a good day's drive, thus extending the journey over forty to one hundred days. The daily programme was as regular as that of a regiment on the march. From morning until noon the cattle were allowed to graze in the direction of their destination, watched by the cow-boys in relays. The cattle by this time were uneasy and were turned into the trail and walked steadily forward eight or ten miles, when, at early twilight, they were halted for another graze. As darkness came on they were gathered closer and closer into a compact mass by the cow-boys riding steadily in constantly lessening circles around them, until at last the brutes lay down, chewing their cuds and resting from the day's trip. Near midnight they would usually get up, stand awhile, and then lie down again, having changed sides. At this time extra care was necessary to keep them from aimlessly wandering off in the darkness. Sitting on their ponies, or riding slowly round and round their reclining charges, the cow-boys passed the night on sentinel duty, relieving one another at stated hours.

When skies were clear and the air bracing, the task of cattle-driving was a pleasant and healthful one. But there came rainy days, when the cattle were restless, and when it was anything but enjoyable riding through the steady downpour. Then especially were the nights wearisome, and the cattle were ready at any time to stampede.

No one could tell what caused a stampede, any more than one can tell the reason of the strange panics that attack human gatherings at times. A flash of lightning, a crackling stick, a wolf's howl, little things in themselves, but in a moment every horned head was lifted, and the mass of hair and horns, with fierce, frightened eyes gleaming like thousands of emeralds, was off. Recklessly, blindly, in whatever direction fancy led them, they went, over a bluff or into a morass, it mattered not, and fleet were the horses that could keep abreast of the leaders. But some could do it, and lashing their ponies to their best gait the cow-boys followed at breakneck speed. Getting on one side of the leaders the effort was to turn them, a little at first, then more and more, until the circumference of a great circle was being described. The cattle behind blindly followed, and soon the front and rear joined and "milling" commenced. Like a mighty mill-

stone, round and round the bewildered creatures raced until they were wearied out or recovered from their fright.

To stop the herd from milling, either after a stampede or when in the cattle-yards at the end of the trip, was a necessary but difficult task. As in a stampede, it was death to an animal who failed to keep up with his comrades, for in a moment his carcass would be flattened by thousands of trampling hoofs. The human voice seemed the most powerful influence that could be used to affect the brutes, force being entirely out of the question. As soon as the "milling" began the cow-boys began to sing. It mattered not what so long as there was music to it, and it was not uncommon to hear some profane and heartless bully doling out camp-meeting hymns to soothe the ruffled spirits of a herd of Texas steers, a use which might have astonished the fathers and mothers of the churches "back in God's country," could they have known of it.

A stampede always meant a loss, and rendered the herd more likely to be again panic-stricken. Certain hysterical leaders were frequently shot because of their influence on the remainder of the column. Another danger was that of the mingling of two herds; while in the earlier days the presence of buffalo was a decided peril. A herd of buffalo roaring and tearing its way across the plain was almost certain to cause a panic, if within hearing, and outriders were necessary to watch for these enemies and turn their course from the trail. Besides, maulauding Indians were always to be feared, and many a skirmish was had between the cow-boys and red-skins. An understanding with the chiefs was, however, usually sufficient to insure safety. Thus accompanied by incidents that brought into play all the strength and strategy of their guards, the horned host moved on. Rivers were crossed by swimming in the same order that had been followed on land.

Reaching the outskirts of the shipping-station the herd was held on the plains until the drover effected a sale or secured cars for shipment. Then the animals were driven into the stockades, dragged or coaxed into the cars, and were sent off to meet their fate in the great packinghouses. The journey had been a strange one to them, often accompanied by savage cruelties at the hands of heartless drivers, and the end of the trip with close confinement of yard and car, the first they had ever known, was strangest of all.

With the loading of the cattle came the "paying off" and the cowboy's brief vacation before returning to another year's round of hard

work and coarse fare. It was not, perhaps, to be expected that after nearly a twelvemonth of life on the prairies he should spend his outing in quiet and dignity. And seldom indeed did he. The cattle towns catered to his worst passions, and saloons and dance-houses flourished with startling exuberance. Gambling ran riot, and quarrels ending in murder were of frequent occurrence. During the height of the season might was the only law, and if occasionally a marshal was found, like William Hickok, the original Wild Bill, who could rule an Abilene in its rudest period, it was because he was quicker with the revolver and more daring than even the cow-boys themselves.

Much glamour and romance have been thrown around the figure of the cow-boy. He was not the dashing and chivalric hero of the burlesque stage, in gorgeous sombrero and sash, nor was he the drunken, fighting terror of the dime novel. He was a very average Westerner, dressed for comfort, and with the traits of character that his business induced. The cow-boy lived a hard life. For months he never saw a bed, nor slept beneath a roof. He seldom had access to a newspaper or book, and had none of society's advantages to lift him to higher things. The roughest of the West's immigrants, as well as many Mexicans, drifted into the business because of its excitement and good wages, and this class by its excesses gave the world its standard for all. With the influences of actual contact with bucking bronco ponies and ferocious Texas steers, themselves by no means elevating, added to the temptations of the cattle towns, all the worst in the herder's nature was sure to be brought out. But hundreds of cowboys were sons of Christian parents, and when they had made a start in life settled down at last as good citizens of the great West they had helped to develop.

The cow-boy with his white, wide-rimmed hat, his long leathern cattle whip, his lariat, and his clanking spur is a thing of the past. The great Texas ranches are enclosed with barbed wire fences, and a genuine Texas steer would attract almost as much attention in the old cattle towns as a llama. Abilene, Ellsworth, Newton, and Dodge City are busy little cities surrounded by rich farming communities and with churches, schools, electric lights, and other evidences of modern civilization. No trace of the old life remains, except some weather-stained and dilapidated buildings, pointed out to the stranger as having been saloons where Wild Tom, Texas Sam, or other strangely named characters, killed men unnumbered "during



the cattle days." But even these traditions are known to but few of the modern inhabitants, so entirely has a new people filled the land in the last decade.

The cattle-trails were in a measure educative. They brought the north and south of the Mississippi Valley into close business relations, a condition which was to the advantage of both. But the life that surrounded them could not endure. The homes of thousands of settlers have pre-empted the grazing grounds. Railroads are ten times more numerous than were the trails, and like the cavalier, the troubadour, the Puritan, and the "Forty-niner," the cow-boy and his attendant life have become but figures in history.

From *Scribner's Magazine*, June, 1892.

## *The Cow Country in Transition*

by EDWARD EVERETT DALE

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RIVALRIES SERVE to explain many things in history. The rivalry between Athens and Sparta, Rome and Carthage, and England and Spain are all familiar Old World examples, while that between North and South, the industrial East and the agricultural West, and New York and Boston are equally familiar for the New. Similarly, rivalries have often existed not between cities, nations, or geographic regions, but between groups or certain social, economic, or racial orders within the same region. When the Anglo-American civilization struck the Spanish culture of the Southwest, when the English colonists came in contact with those of the French in Canada, or when the New England Puritans met and mingled with the German settlers of the Old Northwest, a struggle ensued as to which racial element and which type of social order should prevail.

Out of this mingling of two societies came first conflict and eventually a fusion producing a new order unlike either of the first two,

but with some of the attributes of both. So developed a regional society, growing from two stems, which continued for generations and which still bears fruit of a hybrid variety showing certain characteristics of both parent stocks.

If "it is a wise child that knows his own father," so is it a wise society which knows both its own father and its own mother, or the two dominant roots from which it sprang. Obviously, these are often more than two in number, but perhaps in most cases two are so much more important than the others that they may logically be called the parents of the existing society. The father of the present social order in most of that part of the western prairie states settled within the last two generations was the wild, roaring "cow country" of earlier days, while the mother might be said to be the agricultural society of the homesteaders coming from the wooded, or partially wooded, crop-growing region of small farmers farther east. The story of their introduction to one another and the ripening of their acquaintance until "these twain became one flesh" is a story which, so far as the writer knows, has never been told with any detail. Yet it is a most significant story which, if the figure of speech may be continued, proves conclusively the truth of Kipling's famous statement that "the female of the species is more deadly than the male." It indicates, too, that the bride did all the pursuing, and, having won her mate by strong-arm methods, she eventually imposed upon him and upon the family most of her own ideas and ideals. The wild, roistering days of his youth were left behind. He and his children in time joined the wife's church, adopted her way of life, and settled down as sober, respectable citizens. Only occasionally does the offspring show an outcropping of that paternal wildness which had made its father a bit notorious in earlier years.

It is true that during the period of the honeymoon the groom made a more or less determined effort to induce his spouse to accept his guidance as to the conduct of their daily affairs of life, but in this he met with scant success. She was an obstinate and headstrong wench, and he soon became impressed with the truth of the old rhyme:

A wedding is the greatest place  
For folks to go and learn;  
He thought that she was his'n  
But he found that he was her'n.

This union was to bear fruit in the years following the Civil War when a vast stream of cattle flowed north out of Texas and spread over the central and northern plains, while agricultural settlement hesitated for a time at the eastern edge of the great prairies. Even a half decade after Appomattox the states and territories forming the second tier west of the Mississippi were comparatively thinly peopled. At that time their unsettled area included nearly all of the Dakotas, the western three-fourths of Nebraska, two-thirds of Kansas, virtually all of Indian Territory except for the Five Civilized Tribes of Indians in its eastern one-third, and the western two-thirds of Texas. Much of this region was potentially valuable for the growing of crops, and all of it, together with the broad expanse of more arid lands farther west, was wide open to occupation by cattle. Within two decades after the close of the war the range cattle industry had spread over virtually all of this vast territory and had reached the point of its greatest extent and the height of its importance.

So came into existence that vast pastoral empire commonly known as the "cow country," in which society had for its economic basis cattle and the native pasturage upon which they fed. Like every pastoral society, it was mobile, with the people who composed it far less fixed as to abode than were the crop-growing farmers farther east. True, some ranchmen owned in fee at least a part of the lands occupied by their herds and had built permanent homes where they lived with their families. Most of them, however, occupied temporary ranges upon the public domain or on Indian reservations where their tenure was most precarious and uncertain. In such cases improvements were of flimsy and temporary construction, and the headquarters was merely the administrative center of their business. As conditions changed, these men would, in a few years, shift their operations and establish new headquarters, or in some cases remove all or a portion of their cattle to new ranges quite remote from the original ranch. As for the cowboys who carried on the business, they seldom had any fixed abode which could properly be called a home. They occupied temporary line camps along the borders of a range. Here they might remain for only a few months, after which they would be transferred to some other camp. They followed the round-up wagon in the spring or autumn, accompanied herds of cattle on the long drive up the trail, left one outfit after a few months or a few years to seek employment with another, and were in general a



wandering and restless group seldom occupying, for any considerable length of time, a fixed habitation.

Since the cattle business requires comparatively few persons for its successful operation, the cow country was very thinly peopled and the society primitive and rough. The cowboy, who is, however, often pictured either as a Sir Galahad or a wild semi-outlaw, was, as a matter of fact, neither the one nor the other. He was in most cases a young man who worked hard, lived according to his code, and who maintained toward his employer or the brand an intense and wholehearted loyalty. That some were wild and rough cannot be denied, but they were by no means as black as they have been painted, or as they at times saw fit to paint themselves. The average cowpuncher was a sane and reasonably sober individual who lived a lonely, but not unhappy, life. In bad weather he might endure considerable hardship, but this was forgotten when the sun shone bright and warm and colorful wild flowers sprinkled the green prairie. He liked his work, was proud of his job, and, like every man on horseback, whether he be called knight, *chevalier*, *Ritter*, *caballero*, or cow hand, felt himself distinctly superior to the man who walked.

By the early eighties an enthusiasm for ranching on the great western plains, amounting almost to a craze, had swept over the United States and had extended even to Great Britain and the European continent. By this time, also, a curious kind of "American feudalism" had grown up in the Far West bearing certain similarities to the society of medieval Europe. The great ranchman often occupied a range larger than was the territory claimed by many a petty German princeling. His riders were quite as numerous as were the knights and men-at-arms of some of the Old World barons. His brand, the X.I.T., the Pitchfork, Frying Pan, or Long X, was as widely known as had been the bleeding heart of the Douglas, the white lion of the Howards, or the clenched hand and dagger of the Kilpatricks. The ranch house, where he dispensed a generous hospitality to all comers, except that it often shifted as to place, was somewhat of an equivalent to the medieval castle, and, if the cow country had no tilts or tournaments, the rodeo or roping contest furnished a fairly satisfactory substitute.

The range area was peculiarly a man's country. One range rider has recorded that during a year's work he did not see a woman for nine months, and the writer as late as 1904 visited a ranch in western Texas where the ranchman's wife asserted that she had not seen

another woman for over six weeks. Since women were so few in number, they were held in high esteem and treated with an almost exaggerated respect. Many a quick-witted cowboy known for his gay conversation and clever repartee with his own kind became a tongue-tied, stuttering moron when in the presence of a woman with whom he was but slightly acquainted. Yet some few of the ranchmen had wives and daughters who gave a feminine touch to their homes and who would occasionally arrange social affairs which people traveled long distances to attend. These were, in most cases, dances with few girls and many "stags" where the "square dance" or quadrille was the rule. Music was furnished by one or two fiddlers, assisted at times by someone to "beat the strings" with two heavy knitting needles or pieces of wire. If the home boasted a cottage organ and someone could be found to "second on the organ," so much the better. The dance often lasted all night, with supper served at midnight. "We danced the last set after sunrise" was a proud boast meant to indicate a remarkably good time. Since girls were so few in number, some danced virtually every set, and after breakfast mounted their horses to ride fifteen to thirty miles to their homes.

Such dances furnished the average cow hand with almost his only opportunity for the society of women. His pleasures were few and simple. He sometimes had at his camp a few books or magazines and of course played cards if he had a partner, or if some stray rider dropped in to spend the night. If on his rare visits to town he sought solace in a game of poker or a few drinks, he should be pitied for the loneliness of his life rather than blamed for his weakness or folly.

Into this rough, masculine society of the cow country eventually began to be projected a far different social order. Men from the settled regions to the east, eagerly seeking for "level land" upon which to establish homes, came in with their families in covered wagons, bringing not only strange tools and household goods, but even stranger ideas and ideals. Choosing one-hundred-sixty-acre homesteads on the fertile plains, these men set to work to build homes, plow up the prairie sod, fence fields, and plant crops. Into a region of long-horned steers, hard riding men, boots, spurs, branding irons, saddles, ropes, and six-shooters, they brought plows and hoes, pitchforks, churns, cookstoves, rocking chairs, feather beds, pillows, dogs, cats, pigs, and chickens, but most important of all, wives and children.

To a region of sour-dough bread, beefsteak, bacon, dried apples,

beans, flapjacks, and coffee were brought salt-rising bread, butter-milk biscuits, pies, cakes, doughnuts, preserves, jellies, custards, and fresh vegetables. To a vast area covered with cattle, these newcomers, curiously enough, brought milk and butter, articles of food from which the average cowpuncher shied as does a range horse from corn.

Most significant of all, these people brought the home, the school, the church, and the Sunday school to compete with the camp, saloon, dance hall, and gaming table. With all of these things they brought what was to the cow country a new conception of life and of society—a new set of objectives to be attained.

The effects of the impact of this sober, settled, industrious farming population upon the more primitive pastoral society of the cow country were at once apparent. The range riders regarded these intruders with some contempt and suspicion, not unmixed with active hostility. They must inevitably be men of small ideas, since each was bound to a petty one hundred sixty acres of land, walked rather than rode, and worked at such menial tasks as plowing, milking cows, and feeding chickens. The ignorance and general wrong-headedness of many a newcomer were, moreover, alarming. He climbed on a horse like a man going up a ladder, could not read a brand, and, if he owned a saddle at all, it was an antiquated structure the very sight of which moved the punchers to spasms of laughter. His methods of doing business were mysterious and past finding out. The fence, designed to protect his field, consisted of one wire and a dog, and he possessed a "one-way pocketbook" wherein he hoarded diligently his few hard-earned dimes.

"I guess old man Johnson's maybe a nice old feller enough," said cow hand Bill Jones, "but he don't know nothin' at all about business. Why, he's savin' as hell."

"That's right," answered his companion. "You know th' other day he gave me a letter to mail and two copper cents to buy the stamp. I told him that nothin' less'n a nickel goes in this country."

"Just like him," replied Bill. "He may be all right in his way, but damn his way."

So spoke Bill Jones, and so spoke the cow country as a whole. The homesteader, commonly called the "nester," might be all right in his way, but it was a far different way from that of the range region, and the latter disapproved of it wholeheartedly. His penny-pinching tendency was but one of many unpleasant characteristics, but that alone was bad enough. Any man who had been known to



refuse a respectable traveler a couple of meals and a night's lodging, or, even worse, to demand payment for such a trifling courtesy, was beneath contempt.

The range riders regarded themselves as far above any such petty meanness. In fact, until the coming of these homesteaders, such behavior was an unheard-of thing. A rider might stop at any cow camp, certain of food and shelter and a cordial welcome. If the cowboy stationed at the camp happened to be absent, it did not matter. No lock was on the door, and any hungry traveler passing by was expected to go in and prepare himself a meal or spend the night if he wished, courtesy only requiring that he wash the dishes before leaving. The cow hands drew fair wages, had no families to support, and took very little thought of the morrow. Money, if they had it, was to spend. They bought drinks for the crowd, candy by the pound, wore hats and gloves, and paid enough for one pair of boots to shoe the numerous issue of the homesteader for a whole year with something left over. If they wanted to shoot craps or play poker for high stakes when they were in town, who was to say them nay? It was their own money. If they lost it, they were sure of food and a place to sleep at any ranch or line camp in the whole great pastoral empire that was the cow country. Such minor courtesies as riding thirty miles to restore a strayed horse to the owner, lending a friend half a month's wages, or taking him a quarter of beef were a part of life. Would not anyone do the same? Of course he would, unless he happened to be one of these blue-nosed nesters!

The cow hands observed that their boss, who owned the ranch, carried on his business on the same basis, and they felt it must be the correct basis since he was a wealthy and successful man. His hospitality was boundless. Any stranger was welcome at the ranch and might stay as long as he liked. They had seen the ranch owner feed and care for from fifty to a hundred head of some neighboring ranchman's cattle all winter until the latter could come and get them. With many thousands of dollars in the bank he would give a common puncher a book full of checks signed in blank and start him out to buying steers, certain that every check would be filled out for exactly the correct amount required in each purchase. They had, in some cases, seen him play at dice for fifty dollars a throw, and there were rumors of valuable ranches or an entire brand of cattle won or lost in a single poker game. They knew that he had borrowed

or loaned thousands of dollars with no collateral involved except the name and reputation of the borrower.

"I've being doing business with you for some time now," an old ranchman once wrote to a friend who had met with misfortune. "We've bought and sold back and forth, and I think we're about even. You figure it up, and if I owe you anything, let me know what it is and I'll send you a check. If you owe me anything, just forget it." With such examples before him, it is not surprising that the cowboy was lavish with his money, nor is it strange that both he and his employer had nothing but contempt for the economic ideas of the settler. As a matter of fact, the business methods of the range area might be satisfactory enough so long as everyone practiced them, but, once brought into competition with the methods of the new society that was fast coming, they were nearly certain to bring ruin to those who could not or would not change.

If the range rider disliked the way of the pioneer settlers, however, the latter returned that dislike with full measure "pressed down and running over." The cowboy had, of course, no fear of the homesteaders except the fear that their presence might threaten the security of the only business the ranchman knew. The nesters, on the other hand, both feared and disliked the cowpuncher. To them the cowboy was a wild, reckless type who rode hard, swore hard, and feared neither God nor man. The nesters regarded the cowboy as a swaggering swashbuckler, who carried a gun, had little regard for horse flesh, and who seemed at all times to be "jealous of honor, sudden and quick in quarrel." He probably never attended church or Sunday school and would not, even if he had the chance. He spent his wages foolishly and was strongly suspected of playing cards and other sinful games. He wanted the region to remain a cow country, favored "free grass," and would doubtless be glad to see all the settlers "starve out" and depart for the region from whence they came. His ways were not their ways, nor his thoughts their thoughts, and his interests were certainly not their interests. The nesters wanted more settlers so that they might have a school and preaching at least once or twice a month as well as more and nearer neighbors. The cowboy asserted the grass was the best crop this land would ever produce and that the region would never be a thickly populated farming area; whereas on the hope that it would be just that, the first settlers had well nigh staked "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor." Eager for more neighbors, they wrote letters

to friends and relatives in their old home urging them to come west. Some yielded to their entreaties and came, occupying homesteads near those of the first comers. Sod houses or dugouts sprang up—or down—as the case might be, and little communities of settlers began to be formed that were like small islands of crop growing in the midst of the vast area of grazing lands that formed the pastoral empire of the cow country.

These small groups of settlers were but the advance agents of a great population that was soon to follow. In the two decades from 1870 to 1890, the population of the Dakotas increased in round numbers from 14,000 to 719,000, that of Nebraska from 122,000 to 1,058,000, Kansas from 364,000 to 1,427,000, and Texas from 818,000 to 2,235,000. Making due allowance for inaccuracies in the census returns, these figures are still truly startling; but the full significance of this westward advance can be understood only after an examination of the census returns from some of the central and western counties of such states as Kansas and Nebraska, many of which show a population increase of a hundredfold in a single decade. During the next ten-year period, from 1890 to 1900, the increase in population in the western counties of the states mentioned and in the next tier of states to the west was also very great; while Oklahoma Territory with only 61,000 people in 1890 had increased to 400,000 by 1900. Even in the first decade of the twentieth century Oklahoma, western Texas, and portions of other states in the range area show enormous increases in population.

Distrustful and contemptuous as the cowboy was of these earliest settlers upon the range, the time came when he could not entirely ignore them. Eventually the loneliness of life in his line camp or innate curiosity prompted him to stop at some homesteader's dugout or sod house to ask for a drink of water or to inquire about a stray horse. Here he in all probability made a discovery. The nester had a daughter—a comely young woman of eighteen or twenty years who, even though she belonged to a despised order, was nevertheless amazingly attractive! In a region where there were so few women, the coming of a new girl was regarded as an event of major importance. Too shy to talk much or remain long upon the occasion of his first visit, it was not many days until the cow hand returned, bringing his offering in the form of half a quarter of fat beef, of uncertain origin, slung across his saddle.

The settler was suspicious of the Greeks when they came bearing



gifts, but the family, which had subsisted for weeks on a diet consisting largely of corn bread and buttermilk, warmed a bit to the giver. The wife urged that they could surely do no less than invite him to stay for supper. A kind of *entente cordiale* was established, which, if tinged with distrust on both sides, did not perhaps differ so materially from similar arrangements made by nations of modern times. Away from the homesteader's family the cowpuncher sometimes felt a bit conscience-stricken over his fall from grace and paid a visit to the daughter of some ranchman thirty miles away. Here he must meet the intense competition of a dozen buckaroos, and this, plus the memory of a pair of bright eyes, eventually brought him back to fraternize once more with this family outside his own caste.

The young woman's father spoke wisely and warningly of these wild cowboys and extolled in glowing terms the virtues of the hard-working farm boy on the adjoining claim, but it was plain that the daughter did not altogether agree with him. This is not surprising. After all, the callow granger lad in his overalls, ninety-eight cent wool hat, and heavy plow shoes did not compare favorably with a dashing figure on spirited horse who rode a fifty-dollar saddle, and wore ornate shop-made boots, "California trousers," a white Stetson hat, and soft gloves of the finest buckskin. As for the younger children of the household, they made no attempt to conceal their enthusiastic admiration. A man who could ride a bucking horse, rope a steer, and who carried a gun, wore jingling spurs, and gave you half a dollar merely for opening a gate for him was someone to admire! They compared the two-pound box of candy which he handed out so carelessly with the skimpy dime's worth brought from town by their father or the neighboring farm youth to be divided among four or five children, and it began to be plain where their affections lay.

It was not long until they began to imitate their hero. The father found his two younger sons trying to rope the dog with an improvised *riata* made from their mother's clothes line, or staging a rodeo back of the barn with the milk-pen calves playing the role of bucking broncos. They played cowboy and whittled pistols from wood long before a certain public enemy, who found such a contrivance useful, was born. Sent on an errand to the little store and post office that had been established in the new community, they lingered to listen to the conversation of the cow hands who had dropped in to inquire for the mail or to lay in a supply of tobacco. After remaining as long

as they dared, the lads at last returned to their home with the best alibi they could muster and a vocabulary vastly enlarged even if not exactly enriched. The old songs brought from the East, as the "Gypsy's Warning" and "Silver Threads among the Gold," were apparently forgotten, and the Sabbath stillness of the settler's home was shattered by such mournful productions as "The Dying Cowboy" or "Bury Me Not on the Lone Prairie." The mother, torn between a natural feminine love for a romantic figure and fears for her daughter's happiness, began in time to yield a somewhat reluctant admiration to a generous and attractive young man.

After several calls upon the young woman, the cowboy summoned up courage to ask her to accompany him to a dance, but, unless in the northern zone of settlement where the German or Scandinavian element was large, he in all probability met with a courteous but uncompromising refusal. Dancing in many regions seems to be at the two extremes of civilized society. The primitive and the sophisticated both dance, but the in-betweens will have none of it. The girl made it plain that she was a member of the church and dancing was taboo. They were building a little schoolhouse in the neighborhood and expected to have preaching at least once a month. If he cared to go with her to church or literary society or even to a social or play party at some settler's home, perhaps it could be arranged, but a dance was not to be considered. Even if she were willing to go, her parents would object, and she was a dutiful and obedient daughter. So a play party or social it must be, attended largely by sons and daughters of the nesters. Here such games as "Miller Boy," "Down to Rowsers'," and "Shoot the Buffalo" were played by the young people, while their fathers and mothers, who thought dancing the invention of the devil, looked on with smiling approbation. Later, when the schoolhouse was finished, he accompanied her some Sunday to church and sat throughout the sermon in a state of painful self-consciousness, which was considerably accentuated when she whispered to him her wish that he, too, might make "Heaven his destination."

As more settlers came in, the schoolhouse became something of a social center. Here were held singings, literary society meetings, and box suppers. At the last named, the boxes were sold at auction, and young men would bid vociferously against one another for the box of some particularly attractive girl. After the boxes had all been sold, a cake was often given to the most popular young lady. Votes

were usually one cent each, and in most cases there were but two leading candidates. One of these represented the range riders' interests—usually some ranchman's daughter who was clever and witty, an excellent dancer, and commonly known as "good company"—whatever that might mean. In opposition to her the homesteaders would nominate a young woman who taught a Sunday school class, led the singing at church, and was known to be "good to wait on the sick." The two girls were conducted to the end of the room and seated near the teacher's desk where everyone could see the candidate for whom he was voting, and the contest began. As votes were called out and the money passed to the cashier, tellers checked on the black-board the number of votes. In such cases the cowboys—even those who had shown some attention to a nester girl—usually rallied to the colors, while the granger lads and their fathers were equally determined to elect their nominee and vote *that* girl down! Eventually it became more than a contest between two personable young women. It was a conflict between two social and economic orders. To many of the settlers it was a struggle of the forces of evil against good, of darkness against light, of the past against the future. "Let us elect our candidate and prove to all that this is a progressive, God-fearing community, that the reign of the wild cowpuncher is over, that civilization is mighty and will prevail." Quite often the cow hands, who drew some thirty dollars a month in real money, were able to pay for more votes than could the poverty-stricken settlers. Reckless with their money as in all else, the range riders did not hesitate to pay out their last dollar for votes, but the homesteaders did their best, and, if they went down in defeat, they felt that this was merely another example of the triumph of might over right and of money over principles. They were certain that their day was coming and that it would not be long delayed.

In this they were not mistaken. Settlers continued to pour into the cow country in ever increasing numbers and take up homesteads along the streams and in the more fertile areas of the wide prairies. The ranchmen were forced back into the rougher uplands, sometimes remote from an adequate supply of water. Good land, however, produces good grass, while barren hills and thin soils afforded poor grazing. For a time there still seemed to be an abundance of pasturage. The cow men did not at first understand how much their range had suffered by the homesteading and fencing of the more fertile lowlands. Then they began to realize that their cattle did not



fatten. They looked about for additional pasture lands, but they were not to be found. The range was steadily shrinking. Indian reservations were opened to settlement, and a flood of homesteaders poured in, still further reducing the area that could be utilized for grazing. A village began to grow up about the first general store established in each community. Soon there came a second store, then a third, followed by a blacksmith shop, a hotel, and a church. Railroads began to penetrate the cow country, and the village grew into a real town. Good land began to grow scarce. The homesteaders were soon very much in the majority in most parts of the cow country where there was sufficient rainfall for the growing of crops. Under such circumstances the fusion of the two social and economic orders went on rapidly. More and more cowpunchers began to call upon young women of the settler class. Dimly they began to comprehend how difficult it was for a man on a raw one-hundred-sixty-acre claim to provide his family with the bare necessities of life. They saw the pitiful extremities to which the daughter of the household was driven to secure suitable clothing in order to keep herself attractive and to join in the social life of the community. Toleration took the place of the former antagonism, and they began "first to endure, then pity, then embrace."

The homesteader, under the influence of closer association, found his prejudices beginning to melt. After all, these cowboys were not as bad as he had thought. Perhaps daughter might do worse. Unconsciously, his own conduct and psychology began to be at least slightly influenced by the customs of the range area. His horizon became wider. Finding he must travel greater distances than in the old home, he acquired another horse or two, secured a better saddle, and sometimes surprised his wife by the purchase of things formerly regarded as luxuries.

As the influx of settlers continued, church and school assumed a larger importance. An arbor was constructed and a revival meeting was held, where cow hands who came to scoff sometimes remained to pray. Under the thundering sound of the minister's voice their thoughts turned to the sins of earlier days. They were strangely moved when the congregation sang "Almost Persuaded" or "Turn, Sinners, Turn," and they gazed with open-mouthed awe while the three-hundred-pound wife of a settler gave a solo rendition of "Love Lifted Me," thereby furnishing uncontrovertible proof of the power of redeeming love! Seeing how much a deep religious faith meant

to people who must endure the hardships and vicissitudes of pioneer life, they sometimes sought in religion consolation for their own fast-multiplying troubles.

The ranchman, finding his range reduced, must purchase feed from the settlers or lease from them their surplus grazing land. Business relations once established paved the way for closer social relations. The old-time hostilities and prejudices were passing. There were bitter-enders, of course, in both groups who found their dislike of the other class only intensified by association, but these were in the minority. Generally speaking, the reverse was true. If the examples, given largely in terms of individuals or single communities, should be multiplied by several thousand, a fairly correct picture would be presented of the cow country in transition.

As more of the range was settled and plowed, the ranchman found he must reduce his herds and began to ship all merchantable cattle to market. The settlers, once they had secured a majority in a community, usually proceeded to vote a herd law which forced the ranchmen to acquire land in fee and enclose it with wire fences. With reduced herds and fenced pastures, the rancher needed fewer men; cowboys of long experience found themselves out of a job and realized that it was impossible to secure one. Those retained, who had formerly scorned to do anything but ride, were forced to engage in such lowly work as building fences, plowing fire guards, and planting or harvesting forage crops—since with grazing lands so greatly reduced it had become necessary to feed cattle in winter. Some men out of employment rode farther west, seeking a region where they might hope to spend their lives in the cattle business, but it soon became apparent that there were not jobs enough for all. Many, especially those who had acquired a measure of tolerance for the new order, frankly accepted the changed conditions, married a nester girl, and took up a homestead. Here they grazed a few cattle, but it was not long until they began to plow and plant in awkward fashion and in time some became fairly successful farmers.

No doubt, most of these marriages were happy ones, though it is possible that a larger proportion were not successful than in the case of marriages between persons of less widely divergent backgrounds. Such a statement is impossible to prove, though some evidence exists that it may be true. Texas, with a population of slightly over 3,000,000 in 1900, granted in the twenty-year period from 1887 to 1906 over 62,000 divorces, while Massachusetts, with a popula-

tion of slightly less than 3,000,000 in 1900, granted in the same twenty-year period less than 23,000, and Pennsylvania, with a population of over 6,000,000, only 39,000. Kansas, with a population of less than 1,500,000, had nearly 29,000 divorces in the period from 1887 to 1906, while New Jersey, with a considerably larger population, had less than 8,000. Colorado had nearly 16,000 divorces in this twenty-year period, though the total population in 1900 was only slightly over 500,000, while Connecticut, with a population nearly twice as great, had in round numbers only 9,000. No doubt the greater ease with which divorce could be secured in a western state had its effect, but the very fact that divorce laws were more liberal in such states is in itself significant.

Not all cowboys who found their vocation gone would become farmers. Many who still hated the new order drifted to town seeking employment that would not put them into the class of the despised nesters. Three lines of business appealed to them, and all three were doomed to speedy extinction. They could open a butcher shop in some small town, buying and slaughtering their own cattle; they could establish a livery stable and continue to work with horses; or they could open a saloon. With the coming of railroads and refrigerator cars, the great packing houses forced the local butchers out of business; the automobile destroyed the livery stable; and local option and later prohibition closed the saloon.

The ranchman fared no better in the midst of changed conditions than did his cowpunchers. Some few who were wise accepted the inevitable, sold their cattle for what they would bring, bought a little land, and established a livestock farm. Others, who were foolish, tried to hold out as long as possible, borrowed money at ruinous rates of interest in order to rent pasturage or purchase feed, and in most cases lost everything. Their lax business methods might be satisfactory enough in a region where everyone else practiced the same code, but in a society which pinched pennies and drove hard bargains such methods could end only in disaster and financial ruin. The wrecks of many ranching enterprises that strew the one-time cow country give eloquent testimony as to how far this is true.

The desperation with which some ranchmen clung to the old order is little short of tragic. Like the Indians of the Ghost Dance who believed that the whites would vanish from the earth and the plains again be covered with buffalo, some of these men with an almost religious fervor held fast to the belief that the nesters would



eventually return to the old homes from whence they had come and that the region would once more become a pastoral empire as in days gone by. Their awakening came late, but in most cases it was thorough. Pasturage grew more and more restricted. Every portion of the range area suitable for crop growing—and much which it now seems was not suitable—was occupied. The cattle disappeared from the plains as if by magic, and farmers armed with the tools of their craft sprang up on all sides as though some unseen hand had planted dragons' teeth on every hill and in every valley.

At last the cow man realized that the old order was gone, and, broken in fortune, in many cases, he accepted the inevitable and set to work at strange tasks often with only his two hands with which to earn a living for himself and family. One who knows at first hand the story of these men is likely to forget their shortsightedness and poor judgment and to think only of their courage. Occasionally one of these men who has not yet accepted the new order may still be seen. Such an individual stands like a blackened tree trunk in the midst of plowed fields, a mute reminder of a bygone era. Januslike, he looks in two directions—toward an old world that has gone forever and toward a new one which he does not even remotely understand.

Though the cow country has passed away and the social order it produced is largely a memory, its influence throughout the region where that order once prevailed is still apparent. It is not mere accident that the University of Texas calls its magnificent dining hall the "Chuck Wagon" or that the walls of one of its finest buildings should display the old cattle brands of the Lone Star state, while a similar building at Harvard has carved beneath its eaves quotations from the Bible or from the classics. It is not by chance that traveling salesmen avidly read cowboy stories or that thousands of staid, sober citizens attend each year the rodeos held at many places in what was once the cow country. It is significant that Rotarians purchase from mail-order houses cowboy suits for their offspring and that thousands of people tune in each evening to hear some crooner render, with a Manhattan accent, "A Home on the Range" or "The Last Round-up." One finds a distinguished college professor decorating his office with a magnificent pair of steer horns and framed pictures of trail herds, round-up wagons, and other cowboy scenes. Throughout the West dude ranches have sprung up where college boys and girls, tired businessmen, and society matrons may for a consideration dress

in leather chaps and ten-gallon hats and ride the range under suitable guidance, returning in the evening to eat from tin plates about a mess table and to sleep in a glorified bunkhouse.

Occasionally, in a more civilized society, a bit of the wild lawlessness of other days crops out as a reminder of the code of men long since dead. Old man cow country has gone, but his spirit still lives on in a generation that never knew him in the flesh. He was a good old man according to the standards by which he lived. May his memory long remain green in the hearts of his descendants.

From the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, June, 1937; reprinted by permission of the publishers and the author.

## VII.

# The Outlaw Fringe

*Kansas has had its quota of murderers and desperados, but has escaped the sentimentality which makes the latter into Robin Hoods who plunder and kill that the poor may eat. Even the escutcheons of the more respectable frontier heroes were not always free of blots, and the Kansas attitude has been fairly summed up by an early-day drunken member of the House of Representatives who arose and delivered himself of this oratorical flourish: "Gentlemen of the House: I desire to support the bill providing for painting portraits of John Brown and Jim Lane, our great Kansas heroes. But I wish to add an amendment as follows: 'Resolved that the painter be required to paint each man's name on his portrait so that future generations will be able to tell which noble hero of Kansas was hanged and which committed suicide.'"*

### *Beautiful Katie*

by JOHN P. HARRIS

[John P. Harris, a native Kansan, is a graduate of the University of Chicago, and has spent most of his life in newspaper work and travel. He is editor of the *Hutchinson News* and *Herald* and a student of Kansas history.]

OF THE THREE WOMEN most frequently recalled from the history of Kansas, two, Carry A. Nation and Mary Ellen Lease, while persons of great attainment, strong force of personality, and of the highest moral character, were poorly endowed in one respect. Their physical attributes fell far short of their spiritual ones. They were, to put it bluntly, plain. The third of the triumvirate, however, more than made up for the shortcomings in this respect of the other two. She was radiantly beautiful. But she in turn was deficient in the qualities in which her sisters excelled. Lamentably, her moral make-up did not match her complexion. If she was not personally guilty of at least eight murders, the homicides were at least her own idea.

It might seem that with such a face, such a figure, and such a matchless aura of auburn hair as Kate Bender possessed, her murders would be those crimes of passion which juries always have found



so easy to condone. But not so. Murder with Miss Bender was as strictly a commercial and dispassionate business as the operation of a sausage case factory or of a rendering plant. The gross receipts, and there was practically no overhead, were \$4,600, six horses, two wagons, and bits of jewelry of the sort that every young girl holds dear. Considering that the murders were carried out in a period of a year and a half during the months preceding the great panic of '73, that was pretty good.

Although it is only conjecture, the reasonable presumption is that while a small portion of her money was spent on travel, the greater part was devoted to the support of her aged parents. Kate may have had her failings, but she was a dutiful daughter. She was not as black as sixty subsequent years have painted her. She couldn't have been.

It is unfortunate that the facts concerning the Bender family are difficult to assemble. They carefully concealed the story of their lives before they came to Kansas and the facts of their later life with even greater care. They were in the state such a short time and they attracted so little attention while they were here. The circumstances of their departure were such that the available witnesses were encouraged to draw on their imaginations to the fullest degree possible. Amid a welter of fancy, however, a string of incidents of this sort seems to emerge:

In the spring of 1871 everyone in southeastern Kansas was concerned with the special session of Congress, the settlement of the "Alabama" claims, the greenback question, the federal laws designed to drive the Ku Klux Klan out of existence, and the startling discovery that both the treasurer and the auditor of the state had deposited funds in their custody in such a way as to derive considerable personal profit from the interest paid thereon. The shine had not yet worn off President Grant and newly inaugurated Governor Harvey was popular. The "Patrons of Husbandry" were spreading rapidly and advocating such socialistic things as a graduated income tax and pensions for the soldiers. The rapid influx of settlers had made this section immune from the general financial stringency following the "black Friday" of not so many months before. The newness had not worn off the railroads sufficiently for town lot speculations centering around each station to have collapsed.

With so many things to occupy persons' minds and with the country so booming, it was not surprising no one paid particular

heed to still another farm house springing up beside the Osage Mission-Cherryvale road. The country had become so heavily populated that neighbors crowded on this homestead barely three-quarters of a mile away. It was an important highway. Although the Missouri, Kansas & Texas had been completed and the Leavenworth, Lawrence & Galveston had laid its rails as far as Cherryvale, the east-west travelers still had to depend on horse and wagon. The Osage Mission-Cherryvale highway was a part of their main route which wound its way from Fort Scott to Independence and on to the west.

Probably a dozen simple homes were thrown up along this highway that spring and there was nothing to call special attention to the one on the north side of the road in the corner of Labette county, a mile and a half across country from Morehead station to the northwest. Like the others, it was of the simplest possible construction. It was perhaps 15 by 20 feet, with a door, a window or two and a chimney of sorts. Back of it stood a small stone barn with three walls and a roof, its east side open to the world. Between the two buildings was a well. To the east a small cultivated field. Frequently cultivated, though no one noticed that until later. And in one corner of it a score of young fruit trees venturesomely had been set out.

The family working on its new home was a typical one. A weather-beaten man of 60, once two or three inches over six feet but now stooped with the years. His wife, perhaps five years younger, with gray streaked hair, shapeless and work worn. A boy of 25, tall like his father, with red hair and a not unpleasant countenance except, as it was recalled afterwards, his eyes were set too close together. It was also remembered that he giggled unpleasantly after almost every remark he made. Finally a girl, little more than 20, five feet six in height, 125 pounds in quite properly distributed weight and with a peach bloom complexion that never had anything but a dab of flour to aid it, nor felt the need of more. Her crowning glory, however, was a great mass of deep auburn hair with highlights and undertones, of the type that is seen frequently on magazine covers but in real life almost never. Long after even those most willing to believe the worst of her, grudgingly conceded that she was mighty pretty.

Family name of Bender, the word gradually seeped through the neighborhood. Old man's called John. Old woman's Miz Bender. Boy's name's same as his pap's, and the girl's Katie. Seem to be German, judging from the broken like way of talking they do. There-

with curiosity was appeased and active interest in the newcomers waned.

The appearance very soon of a crudely letter sign reading, "Groceries," over the door of the Bender home, however, was proof that they did not intend to wrest their living from the soil alone. Customers who entered found themselves in a room the principal item of which was a cupboard storing a slender stock of tinned goods and a few staples. A partition made up of a wagon cover and a quilt hanging from the rafters scarcely concealed the fact that the second room contained two beds, a stove, a table, and two or three chairs. If they noticed particularly, they saw a trap door hinged by leather straps partially under the stove which seemed to lead to a cellar of some kind. Beneath they would have found an excavation six feet square and possibly five deep. The bottom of it was roughly floored with flat stones spaced apart better to permit the drainage of water. Or blood.

The Bender establishment performed services of sorts. Travelers occasionally stopped for simple necessities. Nearby farm people found it a convenient source of supplies when they didn't want to take the longer trip to town. Lone horsemen bound for the west in search of new homes for their families sometimes stopped in for a meal, or pressed the dwelling into service as an inn, resting luxuriously in one or the other of the two beds while their hosts hospitably shared the stone barn with the travelers' steeds.

As operators of a grocery and a travelers' rest, the Bender family before long naturally were on at least speaking acquaintance with most of the country-side. They even went beyond that to take a normal part in community affairs. The father attended Granger meetings and political gatherings, although his voice was never raised in debate. The boy and girl went to meeting at the nearest country church with reasonable regularity and their voices blended pleasantly with the choir. Being as comely as she was, it is probable Kate was not without escort home in addition to her brother. The surmise is beyond verification, however, for in the light of subsequent developments, the young men of the neighborhood showed a marked reticence toward acknowledging even the most casual of social relationships with her.

Kate had other accomplishments that brought her even more and not unfavorable attention. She went to Cherryvale, for a while to serve as waitress in the hotel there and her auburn hair aroused far



more complimentary comment than the dining room's regular daily choice of roast beef, roat pork, or stew. Moreover, she developed powers as a medium. Under the date of June 18, 1872, she had cards printed and generally distributed which modestly proclaimed her talents:

PROF. MISS KATIE BENDER

Can heal all sorts of Disease, can cure Blindness, Fits, Deafness, and all such disease, also Deaf and Dumbness.

Residence, 14 miles East of Independence, on the road from Independence to Osage Mission, one and one-half miles South East of Morehead Station.

Katie Bender.

It her patients' fits were not cured, at least they generally got over them. Her seances were widely attended, particularly by country women who were yet to have their lives brightened by the radio, the motion picture, or even by the party line. Although it made them nervous, particularly as they thought about it in later years, they were especially thrilled by her sanguinary remarks while in her trances and her habit of picking up a dagger from the table and plunging it deep into a heart drawn on the wall. If there are no testimonials left to her healing powers, either of the mind or of the body, at least there were no complaints.

It was not long after the Benders had come out of the nowhere to settle in Labette county that a body was found in a creek about three miles from their home. It was that of a man whose throat had been cut neatly from ear to ear. The man was a stranger and the inquiry was casual. If there was any coincidence, nobody remarked it, and the occurrence was soon dismissed as one of those unfortunate ones that are bound to happen anywhere occasionally.

But by the summer of 1872 the Osage Mission-Cherryvale road had begun to acquire a bad name. Travelers would set out from one town to the other and then for no reason that anyone could see, never reach their destination. Mostly they were men from other parts of the country and always they were persons who journeyed alone. The ones who traveled by day were just as likely to vanish as those who rode by night. Not only did men vanish, but their horses and their wagons along with them. There were no known gangs of highwaymen in the country. The road lay principally across

the open prairie. There were no traces left of those who had disappeared.

The mystery naturally was slow in developing. Means of communication were slow and unreliable. The vanished ones were strangers to the community. It was only after one group of anxious relatives, then another, appeared to inquire about the missing ones who were known definitely to have been at Osage Mission or Cherryvale on such and such a date and had not been heard from since, that suspicions began to form and fear to spread.

Because of the constant flow of travelers from the east, westward bound, there were three imaginary victims for every actual one. After a time the missing were being numbered hysterically by the dozen. There was talk of reviving the Vigilantes who had done such valiant work only six years before, but there was no place for the Vigilantes to start. There were whisperings about the supernatural, and people began to stay indoors of nights. Church attendance began to show a conspicuous increase. And then to the list of the missing was added the name of Dr. William York of Onion creek, just over in Montgomery county, the other side of Independence.

One morning late in March of 1873, Dr. York saddled his horse to ride to Fort Scott to negotiate the sale of a house he owned there. He found a buyer the day he got there but without waiting to have any money paid down he started on his return journey, for his wife lay at home sick. He stopped for a few hours' sleep beside the road. He paused briefly at Osage Mission to refill his cigar case. And then he vanished as completely as all the other travelers had from that road.

When Dr. York failed to return home the night he intended, his wife immediately became alarmed. The stories that had been circulating for months of men mysteriously missing added nothing to her peace of mind. She soon enlisted the services of her husband's brother. By morning Colonel George York in turn had called Sheriff Stone to his aid. A posse was organized and the search begun.

It was necessary for them to ride the length of the road to establish the fact that the doctor had come at least as far as Osage Mission on his return journey. They began an intensive search of the highway back toward Independence and the immediately adjoining countryside. Naturally they came after a while to the Bender establishment. Kate met them at the door, a smile on her face as bright as the early spring day. Did she know a Dr. York? She did, indeed.

Had she seen him recently? Assuredly. Only the afternoon before, in fact, when he had stopped to purchase some bread and cheese for his supper, to water his horse, and to be on his way.

Kate went beyond that in her effort to be of aid to the posse. She mentioned the fact that the spirits occasionally told her surprising and inexplicable things, and offered to give a seance on the spot to see if her principal control, an old Indian chief of a most bloodthirsty nature, could reveal anything. There would, she said, be no charge. Colonel York, however, was in no mood for a seance. Perhaps as a tribute to the beauty of the girl who stood before him, though, he promised to return the following day if in the meantime no trace had been found of his brother. With that the posse galloped on.

Two days later Colonel York did pass the Bender home again on a second vain search of his brother's route. Recalling his promise he stopped and knocked on the door but as there seemed to be no one at home, he soon was on his way and thought no more about it.

The next day at Thayer, 12 miles to the north, the howling of a dog attracted someone's attention to a team of horses and a large lumber wagon under which the hound was tied. This outfit drawn up on the roadside at the edge of the town seemed to have been abandoned for at least several hours. No one recalled having seen it before. There was a little feed for the horses in the wagon bed and a wide board on which the word, "Groceries," had been crudely lettered. But that instead of dissipating the mystery only deepened it. At the constable's order the team was put in a livery barn to wait the owner's claim. The Thayer *Headlight* made routine mention of the discovery but no one paid the matter much attention.

Eighteen days pass by. In the meantime the search for Dr. William York was vigorously continued but to no avail. Even the personal offer of \$500 reward by Governor Osborn did not produce any clue of value. Various customers had stopped at the Bender store but on finding the door locked and no one about had gone unthinkingly on their way. A neighboring farmer, Lee Dick, who lived only two miles distant had made two such calls. On the third, Saturday morning the first of May, because by this time he was completely out of cornmeal, he did a little investigating. In the barn lot he found a calf tied by a rope and dead from starvation. He returned to the house and looked as best he could through cracks in the board shutters over the windows. Nothing seemed to be amiss. He sniffed.



Yes, he had been right. It was the rancid smell of decaying flesh. Mr. Dick did not loiter.

The word of the farmer's discovery spread rapidly. Sunday after church the Bender place became a focal point. Dozens assembled to tramp the ground, look at the body of the calf, peek in the windows. Mr. Dick had been right about the smell, all agreed. It had not been imagination. But none dared break in the house.

It was not until Tuesday morning that the official investigation was made under the direction of Sheriff Stone with Colonel York as his chief assistant. In the meantime some subscriber of the *Thayer Headlight* recalled the item about the abandoned team he had read two weeks previously and called it to the official's attention. A committee was sent to Thayer the members of which returned as soon as hard-ridden horses could bring them. They had identified the team, recognized the sign and ascertained from the station agent that the night prior to the discovery of the puzzle of the horses and wagon, four persons had bought tickets for Humboldt and left on the evening train. There was an old man, an old woman, a young man, and a girl. The girl, the agent said, had red hair. He was positive about that.

The search of the house showed the investigators little more than they had been able to see through the cracks in the shutters. It was obvious only that the occupants had left in a hurry without bothering to take many of their possessions with them. That odor noticed outside the building, however, was even stronger within and when finally the trap door beneath the stove was opened, it became overpowering. So much so that no one would go down to see what was beneath. It was necessary for the assembled crowd to procure logs and literally roll the house off its cellar before the investigation could be continued.

But again there was disappointment for the searchers. The excavation revealed nothing but quantities of blood drying foully on the stones that formed the floor.

The hunt then turned to the cultivated field adjoining the farm yard. There was one spot where the earth seemed recently to have been turned. Shovels were found and it was not long before the body of a man was uncovered. His face was down, his legs bent up so they extended nearly to the surface. They could see that the back of his skull had been crushed with some heavy instrument. When

they turned him over they saw his throat had been cut completely open. The body was that of Dr. William York.

The diggers attacked the entire field in a frenzy. In an hour seven more bodies had been found. Six of them had been buried so as to form a neat circle around one of the young trees. Six of the bodies were those of men and one was that of a child of 7 or 8. The mutilation of all was the same, and identical, too, was the manner of burial.

A study of the interior of the Bender home made the technique of the crimes self-evident. The table and chairs were so placed against the cloth partition that the head of any guest leaning back was clearly outlined to a person in the front room. A sledge hammer was found there with which either the father or the son had dispatched the traveler as he was enjoying his meal, or engaging in small talk with his enchanting waitress. If the victims were luncheon guests, their bodies were thrust hurriedly through the trap door so that no other unexpected diner would be upset by the sight that otherwise would have confronted him. The cut throats can only be explained as the touch of a gentle hand. After dark the bodies would be brought back up to be despoiled of their money, their jewelry, and such of their garments as were suitable for tall men, before being given a hasty and sketchy burial. The manner by which the horses and travel equipment were disposed of has never been solved to this day.

There the story of Kate Bender and her family properly ends. With 18 days' start, \$4,600, and quite possibly clear consciences, there was not the slightest chance of the chase catching up with them. It was pursued relentlessly, however, to the ends of the country and for years thereafter. Clue followed false clue at increasing intervals as time went on. One suspect after another was arrested and released. Possible accomplices were questioned for hours without result. As long as 20 years afterward an auburn-haired woman of middle age and her elderly mother were brought back to Parsons for an uncomfortable two days in jail before their proper identities were established and they were set free. Possibly such reports as they heard of the search amused Kate and her family living, under other names and in some distant part of the nation, a more conventional life. Conceivably she may still be alive somewhere today, a shriveled little old woman, now well along in her eighties, and well thought of by her neighbors. No one can say.

But Kate Bender's story has two endings. One may take one's

choice. The second is more fanciful, but still it is accepted by at least one reputable historian. By all the rules of drama, it should be the official one. Not only does it emphasize the slight rewards of sin but it paints a scene which for grim intensity rivals that unforgettable one of the death of Milady in the hands of D'Artagnan and the Musketeers.

In this other ending the time intervals are shortened. Fresh wagon tracks lead northward across the prairie from the Bender home as the searching party descends on the murder farm. Two horsemen detach themselves from the group and gallop madly along the trail. It leads them to Thayer. The Benders, they find, have taken the train only the night before and their tickets read not to Humboldt but to New Chicago, a village that was yet to unite with its rival, Tioga, to form Chanute. By telegraph they learn that the fugitives have doubled on their tracks and taken train again, this time to Chetopa in the southern part of Labette county and only two miles from the Indian territory.

The report is brought back to the Bender place where during the while the ghastly discovery of the eight bodies has been made. A small group is organized. At its head is Colonel York, who waits only long enough to arrange to have his brother's body put in a proper grave. The relentlessness and determination on his face reflect the vow he has sworn to himself. By cutting across country the avengers gain greatly on the four who have gone by the longer rail route. At Oswego they throw themselves from their exhausted horses and commandeer fresh mounts to dash on to Chetopa only nine miles away. There they find the Benders, only three hours ahead of them now, have purchased a team and wagon to drive southwesterly in the direction of Grand River, 30 miles into the Territory.

Again fresh horses and away. It is not long before a wagon drawn by a team of laboring horses is sighted in the distance and not long again until they have overtaken it. Four persons dismount from the wagon and stand beside it on the open prairie. The pursuers surround them. Few words are spoken. The sentence is pronounced. The prisoners neither ask for mercy nor do they expect it. Four shallow graves are dug. Four persons stolidly watch. Four shots echo away into the distance. A matchless head of hair is dyed a brighter shade of red.

The burials are hasty. The graves are smoothed over so that with the first rain all trace of them will be obliterated. The team of horses



is turned loose. The wagon is pulled a few yards away and burned. The avengers swear an eternal pledge of silence. They remount their horses and without a look behind ride off to the north. Not a word is spoken among them. All but one of them are thinking of a girl's face it will be impossible for them to forget.

Reprinted from the *Kansas Magazine*, 1936, by permission of the author.

## *The Dalton Gang*

by THOMAS BEER

[Thomas Beer was an American writer whose most famous books were *Stephen Crane*, *The Mauve Decade*, and *Hanna*—all written in the 1920's.]

AT HALF PAST NINE on the bright morning of October 5, 1892, a lad named John Sibert was helping his aunt to wash dishes in a house of Coffeyville, Kansas. He had arrived in the little city two days before and was leaving Coffeyville on the train at noon. Coffeyville had two topics, that week; the main street was torn up for new drains and somebody had told somebody else from saddle to saddle on the prairie that Bob Dalton had bragged he would raid his own town in broad daylight. At half past nine, then, John Sibert was helping to wash dishes diligently. Between that moment and the second of twenty-five minutes to ten, rifles crashed. John leaped down his aunt's steps and slid against a post, stopping his watch. Some lad ran past him yelling: "The Daltons are in!" and the word reached a clerk at the station. In a few minutes men in Omaha and Kansas City were shouting the news as the one word, "Dalton, Dalton, Dalton, Dalton . . ." clicked from the keys all through the midlands. John Sibert loped around a corner and suddenly faced two long, grave young men with rifles in their hands. He didn't know Bob and Emmett Dalton from any other strangers and he started to ask something. Bob drawled: "Keep away from here, bud, or you'll get hurt," and shoved the boy aside placidly, then placidly strolled along with Emmett, snapping his fingers and whistling through his teeth. At once a lad named Luke Baldwin hurried into sight and didn't pause when one of the brothers shouted to him. Bob Dalton killed him forthwith and the pair trotted from John Sibert's view. . . . The famous gang rode into town at half past nine. They left their horses in an alley and

calmly strolled up to separate in the space before the town's two banks. Bob and Emmett plundered one bank. Grattan Dalton with the henchmen Bill Powers and Dick Broadwell<sup>1</sup> attended to the other. Citizens grabbed the rifles with which the antecinemetic West did its serious shooting and the fight began. Bright spires of glass toppled from frames of windows; smoke went in surges along the street as men fired busily from porches or through doorways. There are a hundred legends of what happened. Young John Sibert knelt beside the dying boy in the alley behind one bank and heard a man named Gump swearing in the pain of a shattered hand. Presently Broadwell rode wildly down the street with his hands gripped on the horn of his great Mexican saddle and fell dead from his mount a little way from the noisy town. Somebody killed Bill Powers. Grattan Dalton ran down the sidewalk with blood on his face and paused to rip the green handkerchief from his throat in full range of the batteries before he turned at the corner of a stable and fired back, killing the city's marshal with a superb shot from the hip. His shoulder was riddled so that he couldn't lift his rifle. He lurched from sight down the alley toward the tethered horses. Bob Dalton strolled into view, loading his rifle, and a hundred muzzles were aimed at his blue shirt. One ball caught him above the navel but he walked on and sat on a heap of stones beside a barn, firing again. A man named Kloehr ran from cover straight at the terrible rifle and shot the gang's captain in the lungs, then whirled and sent a bullet through Grattan Dalton's throat as the youngest brother crawled toward the plunging horses. Firing stopped. Men hurried up and a thick group formed around Bob Dalton in his carmine puddle on the clay. The body heaved in its blood but he kept yelling: "Ride!" Then someone howled and the crowd saw Emmett Dalton struggling among the horses. He was wounded four times when he got into his saddle and sat huddled with his gloves clasped on his groin. Men lowered their rifles, expecting him to fall, as men shot in the groin do, generally. But all the brothers were valiant. He spurred his horse down the alley and swung from the stirrups to seize Bob's arm. Politeness ended. Carey Seaman blew in his side with a fast shot. The last Dalton slid across his brother's body. It was now ten minutes to ten. Sightseers poured from trains before noon and the corpses of Lord Tennyson's escort to Walhalla were photographed so that it

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<sup>1</sup>Called sometimes "Jack of Diamonds" from the song which he sang constantly. The song now passes as a "Negro melody."

could be proved the Dalton gang was out of business after five years of graceful, even endearing performance. Unlike the James and Younger gangs, they didn't blow unarmed children to rags nor did they kill their mistresses in farewell as did the unlovable Tumlinson, once something of a hero. They were amiable and rather mannerly bandits, on the whole, and yet no ballad bears on their name. The great tradition of Sturdevant, Murrel of "the mystic clan" in Andrew Jackson's reign, Boone Helm, Billy the Kid, and Jesse James ended here in an alley on the crackling sound of Carey Seaman's shotgun. Jay Gould died eight weeks later in civilized New York, and in his bed.

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## VIII.

### Life in a Pioneer Town

*Country-town life is derivative of rural life. Except in the larger centers, life in the Kansas country town before 1900 offered little to set it apart from life on the farm. The town's very existence depended upon the surrounding territory, which made for an intermixture of town and country in most activities. This village life came in for a sound threshing during the 1920's, when it became popular for writers to look back on Main Street with a cold, disapproving eye. Yet despite village narrowness, crudeness, smugness, and cussedness, the human spirit by some means did strive upward. The pioneers of Kansas believed in churches, schools, and newspapers. They ran riot in establishing the three. They also believed in making government an instrument of human welfare; hence in the newspaper as a spokesman and watchdog for the people.*

#### *The Little Boy and His Pa*

by E. E. KELLEY

[E. E. Kelley (originally, Ellsworth Kelley), a native of Indiana, came to Kansas in 1887, settling near Toronto, where he taught school. In 1909 he bought the *Toronto Republican* and became one of the best-known newspaper men in Kansas. For many years he wrote the "Kansas Grass Roots" column in the *Topeka Capital*.]

THE LITTLE BOY and his pa lived on a ranch where the short grass ran down the slope to meet the elm and the hackberry trees along the river. He was the only little boy in the family; the only child, for that matter. His mother thought him the only little boy in the world, for she knew him well. The little boy and his pa did not have an extended acquaintance. His pa was a very busy man, whose cattle business took him here and there and everywhere a great deal of the time. So the little boy did not see him every day, and when he did see him it was usually at meal time. When at home, sometimes his pa would say: "Come, little boy, wake up if you want to eat breakfast with your pa and ma."

And the little boy would answer, "I'm getting dressed, Pa."

At noon his pa would say: "Come, little boy, wash your face, and comb your hair, and be sure you act nice at the table."

The little boy would reply, "Yes, sir."

At night when the clock struck nine his pa would say: "Now, little boy, it's bedtime for folks of your size."

Then the little boy would kiss his ma, and call, "Good-night, pa!" as he went upstairs to bed.

So their acquaintance stood till one September day when the little boy was ten years old. That day his pa took the little boy with him to the county-seat. That day the little boy and his pa got acquainted with each other. It was a Kansas September morning. This sentence will sufficiently describe it to all who have passed a September in the short-grass country. Words cannot convey an adequate description to others. They rode along in silence for a while. The little boy had never been to the county-seat, and his imagination was busy with the farther end of the journey. By and by he fell to counting the herds of cattle grazing on the short-grass. He enjoyed the changing landscape. The quails whistled from the brown corn-fields. Somewhere back on the uplands the prairie chickens were drumming their sunrise march. He viewed with intense enjoyment the tag game of a village of prairie dogs. He watched a coyote in pursuit of a jack-rabbit. But even upon the soul of a child impressions of sound and sight will sometimes pall. Then the little boy, all unconscious of what he was doing, began to let his pa get acquainted with him. "Pa, do you remember when you were a little boy—a ten-year-old boy—like me?"

The vision of a barefoot boy with trousers rolled up to his knees, fishing for chubs and goggle-eyes in the old Spring branch—so many years ago—flitted before the father's mental vision as he replied: "Well, yes, my son, I remember quite well."

"What was your name when you were a little boy? Your *boy* name, you know, that the other fellows called you by?"

"Tommy. Your grandma called me 'Tommy Taylor.' But the boys I used to run with called me 'Pony'—'Pony Taylor.' Sometimes they'd turn my name around and call me 'Taylor's Pony.'"

"What did they call you 'Pony' for?"

"Oh, I guess it was because I was a great big, overgrown boy."

The little boy caught the spirit of the irony, and laughed outright. He was silent for a while, and then he began putting his father through a little boy's catechism. "Pa, did you ever play 'scrub'?"

"Scrub? What's that?"

"Oh, it's a game something like base-ball that you play when there isn't enough fellows there to make nine on a side."

"When I was a boy—when I was a Pony Taylor—we played town ball, and if we hadn't enough on one side, why, we gave that side a 'blind eye.' "

"Blind eye! What's a blind eye?"

"Oh, it's just letting the first fellow out on a side play again."

"I see now. That made the sides even, didn't it? But did you ever play humper-down or foot-an'-a-half or high jump or put the shot?"

"Well, not by those names. We used to play hop-step-and-a-jump, bull-pen, and old three-cornered cat."

"Do you know what an alley or taw is?"

"Sure! I'll never forget them."

Another short silence. The little boy was thinking. "Pa, can't you tell me something—something funny—that happened—when you were a little boy?"

"Let me see! Well, I remember something that I thought was pretty funny when it happened, and it got still funnier as I thought about it in school time."

"What was it?"

"It wasn't anything much." His pa hesitated a moment before telling it, for he did not know the little boy well enough to be certain that he would be able to appreciate what, to him, was the ludicrous feature of the story. Then he began: "There was a little boy in our school that called himself the 'Boss.' He was a great big hulk of a fellow, and most of the boys were small, for it was a summer term. If we played war, he was the captain. If we played horse, he was the driver. Well, one day he had a whole lot of us fellows pulling a sled of rocks from one part of the yard to the other. We had a hedge pole tied to the sled for a tongue, and each of us took hold of the pole with one hand and pulled. All at once he took a notion that he would be a horse, and took my place and made me be driver.

"I soon saw what he was about. He was going to be the meanest horse ever hitched up. He reared and pranced and plunged and knocked the rest of the horses right and left. I cracked him one with the whip, and he kicked; and when he kicked, he struck his bare foot on a hedge thorn and tore it pretty badly, and then that unmanageable horse just sat down and howled! After school took up, I got to thinking about it, and I laughed right out. The teacher brought me



out on the floor, and when she asked what I was laughing at, I told her I had thought of something funny. She said that she thought of something funny too, and she took me over and set me between two girls. Then I cried."

The little boy laughed delightedly and said, "*I've* never had to sit with girls."

There was another mile sped over before the little boy spoke again. "Pa, when you went fishing, what did you use for bait—good bait, you know?"

"Angle-worms to catch goggle-eyes, and minnows for bass. I fished for goggle-eyes mostly."

"Pa, do you think it does any good to spit on bait?"

His pa considered carefully before answering; then he said that, when he was a boy, it was so believed by all fishermen.

"Well, that's what I think, though I don't exactly see why. But Billy Mullins catches more fish than any of us fellows, and he says the reason is because he always spits on his bait. Say, Pa, did you ever go swimming the whole afternoon? Just swim and swim till supper-time came, and then feel sorry because it was time to go home?"

"Did I? I used to be in the long hole of Spring branch so much that your grandma pretended that she could see scales and fins starting to grow on my body."

"Could you dive, and turn handsprings off the spring-board, and tread water, and lay your hair?"

"Better than any other boy in the crowd."

"Then the little boy moved close over to his father, and said: "So can I."

By and by they came in sight of the county-seat. The little boy was surprised at its size. He expected it to be larger than Taylor's Corners, which had a school-house, a blacksmith shop, and a store where they got the mail. But he had not dreamed of such a picture as burst upon his sight when they reached the hilltop that overlooked the county-seat. Street after street walled in with high houses! Seven church steeples! A great two-story school building! Whole blocks of two-story and three-story business houses! It seemed to him like a scene out of his pictorial Aladdin which he found by his plate on Christmas morning. It was after reaching the city that the little boy began getting acquainted with his pa.

"Well, well, Taylor! I'm glad to see you. I am indeed. I was just

telling my wife this morning that I would rather see Tom Taylor than any man likely to attend the convention. You see, Taylor, I've not forgotten those three years we spent in the mounted infantry, nor how you pulled me out of the Johnnies' hands when I got that bullet in my arm at Okolona. Say, those Johnnie Rebs were the hot stuff that day, weren't they? And how are you getting along, Taylor, and how is the wife; and—is this your boy?"

"Yes—all I've got—and he's a namesake of yours, Judge—William Strong Taylor."

"You don't say! Well, well, well! Your boy and my namesake! A fine boy, sir, a fine boy." And the judge shook the little boy's awkward right hand—for it was not much used to handshaking and worked very much indeed like a pump-handle—and patted the little boy's head.

"You and the little boy will take dinner with me today, Taylor. We don't get a chance to visit very often, so we'll just go right along down to the house, and talk over old times until dinner"; and the judge took his pa by the arm, and, holding the little boy's hand, together the three walked down the street to the home of the judge.

So walking, the little boy was face to face with the greatest episode of his short life. He had known that he was named for the great Judge Strong. He had occasionally heard his father speak of the judge in terms of the highest respect, and the little boy, in his boyish way, had grown to think him a very great man, only surpassed in greatness by the governor himself; and now the judge had actually patted him on the head, and called him a fine boy; and now they were to take dinner with him! Again he thought of Aladdin.

While his pa and the judge were talking on the veranda, the little boy sat like some little old man, listening to the tales of camp life and army hardships; listening until he felt that he would have given anything in the world—which meant his Aladdin and his pony, Topsy—to have been old enough to have carried a saber and ridden a cavalry horse, and to have had a Spencer carbine slung across his back.

At dinner he behaved very well, and said "Yes, sir," and "No, ma'am," and "If you please" in just the right places, and the judge beamed on him with smiles of approval. He really would have enjoyed another piece of custard pie, and one more spoonful of grape jelly; but he remembered his manners, and resolutely declined them when motherly Mrs. Strong insisted on a second helping.

As they went back down town after dinner was over, the little boy was surprised to notice how many men knew his pa. They all acted as if they were glad to see him, and shook hands with him very heartily, and called him "Captain." Finally they reached the Opera House, where the convention was to be held. The little boy gazed curiously on the noisy, surging, good-natured crowd of delegates and politicians that filled the room. By and by a big man on the stage hammered with a mallet on a table, and called the house to order. The committee on organization made its report, and named Captain Thomas Taylor for chairman. The crowd cheered, and adopted the report unanimously. Then there were cries of "Taylor! Taylor! Speech from Taylor!"

The little boy felt proud and sorry all at once—proud of the honor that had come to his pa, sorry because he was sure his pa could not make a speech. He had read something of Patrick Henry, and Webster, and Henry Clay, and knew that they were speech-makers. But he knew that they were dead, and he had a vague idea that nobody living, certainly nobody in that country, could make speeches unless it might be preachers and lawyers, or the school-master on the last day of school. So when his pa stood up before the crowd and bowed, and said: "Fellow-citizens and gentlemen of the convention," the little boy grew very pale, and could hear his own heart beat.

But his pa went right off into a speech about the grand old party and the spirit of liberty, and about the platform. The little boy wondered if he meant the platform upon which he was standing. Then his pa told a humorous story, and the crowd laughed and cheered. He spoke of prison-pens and dead heroes, and the little boy saw a man draw his coat sleeve across his eyes. When his pa had finished his speech, the little boy thought the cheering would never cease, and he mentally placed his pa in the list of men who could make speeches, and wondered if some time that speech would be placed in a Fifth Reader for boys to study in school, along with the speeches of Henry and Webster and Clay.

The convention then proceeded to nominate the ticket. Finally Judge Strong was on his feet making a speech. He was placing a name before the convention for representative. He said he wished to name a representative citizen, a man well known and held in esteem by all who knew him; a man who had marched and fought by the judge's side through the years of the war; who carried in his



body the bullets of battle and bore upon his breast the scars of conflict. He drew a vivid picture of this man leading his company in a desperate charge at Missionary Ridge, and concluded by saying, "Gentlemen, I have the honor to place before this convention the name of Captain Thomas Taylor, of Summit Township."

There were more cheers, and some one moved to suspend the rules and make the nomination unanimous. Motion carried. Captain Thomas Taylor was declared the nominee by unanimous vote. The little boy could not remember anything like it in his story of Aladdin.

The convention was over, the congratulations of the delegates and others showered upon the captain, and then the little boy and his pa were on the homeward journey. They did not talk much for many miles. His pa was busy thinking over the events of the day. So was the little boy. The sun had gone down. Suddenly the quiet of the twilight hour—the great impressive silence of the plains—was broken by a fusillade somewhere off in the gathering darkness. Some belated hunters were taking a parting shot at a scurrying jack-rabbit. A correlation of ideas inspired the little boy to ask: "Pa, when you were a soldier in the war with Judge Strong, did you ever kill any-one?"

His pa did not answer at once. In an instant there flashed before his eyes the events of a September day in a year long gone. Clouds of smoke hung over a battle-field. The pungent, nauseous odor of sulphurous smoke was in his nostrils. Again he looked down a line of blue-coated horsemen sitting like statues, each holding a drawn saber. The men had grimy faces and tense, set jaws. He heard Jack Stevens jest about what pretty corpses they would make. Another man was softly whistling "The Girl I Left behind Me." Dick Saunders cursed the whistler, and some of the boys laughed. A blast of the bugle cut through the smoke-laden air. A shell screamed overhead. A minie ball wailed and shrieked the length of the line. Each man leaned forward in his saddle, and hitched his belt a notch tighter.

"Ta-ta. Ta-ta-ra. Ta-ta-ra-a-a!"

In ten seconds the company was making a saber charge now historic. It was a cumbrous whirlwind of horse and rider, and above, the sheet lightning of flashing sabers. The lightning faded, and the sabers were dripping, but not with rain. A grey-sleeved arm was swinging a saber at his throat. Like a machine moving at higher

speed, his own saber met and drove back that of the gray arm, and rested upon the cheek of the wielder. When his own saber swung to position its mark was upon the face. The face wavered for an instant, and then pitched forward. Was it a dead face? He never knew.

"Pa, did you ever *kill* a man when you were in the war?"

His pa, like one waking from a deep sleep, answered slowly, "Not that I know of, my son."

"Well, I'm awful glad you didn't," said the little boy, as he again moved closer to the side of his pa.

The little boy was sleepy and quite tired out when he reached the farmhouse on the hill-slope. His ma heard them coming, and opened the big gate for them to drive into the barnyard. As the little boy climbed out of the buggy and into the arms of his mother, he put his arms around her neck, kissed her, and exclaimed: "Oh, ma, I've had the best time! And I saw Judge Strong, and we ate dinner at his house, and pa knows everybody, and he made a speech, and they nominated him for something, and his boy name was 'Pony,' and he could swim and tread water and lay his hair same as I can."

His ma kissed him for reply, and knew that the little boy and his pa had entered the Land of Companionship together.

From *McClure's Magazine*, June, 1900.

## *I Go to the Patient*

by ARTHUR E. HERTZLER

[Arthur E. Hertzler came to Kansas at the age of twenty, studied medicine at home and abroad, and became a famous surgeon. In 1938 he published *The Horse and Buggy Doctor*, a best seller.]

COUNTRY PRACTICE was so called because it was just that. The patients lived in the country and it was necessary for the doctor to drive out into the country to visit them. The doctors, for the most part, lived in the villages but the village inhabitants formed only a very small part of the doctor's practice. There was but little office practice because patients were treated with the simple remedies at home unless or until the state of the disease seemed to be threatening or the pain became too great to bear.

Country practice, therefore, naturally divided itself into two divisions, first that of transportation, the act of conducting oneself to the bedside of the patient; second, what one did after he arrived at the bedside of the patient.

The means of transportation at the beginning of any practice was preferred in the order named: horse or team and buggy; horse and road cart, a two-wheeler vehicle with a simple and very hard board seat on which no cushion could be fastened; horseback; and finally just plain everyday walking it or pedaling a lowly bicycle. The bicycle was fine when roads were good and the distance not too great but I never could suppress an inferiority complex while riding one. A long-legged man never can look professional riding a bicycle. Therefore after I began to get some consultation practice this means of transportation was abandoned.

Naturally most of the sickness occurred when the weather was inclement, either very hot or very cold and stormy and the roads indescribably bad; in fact there were no roads. At such seasons I sometimes spent the greater part of the twenty-four hours in the buggy. Sometimes in the spring and fall when the weather was fine there might not be a country call for a week or even longer. When the roads were good the population suddenly became provokingly healthy. Not only was country driving time-consuming and fatiguing but at times it became exceedingly inconvenient. But we accepted it as part of the job. It was this phase of the work, it may be noted, that made many young men shun country practice. Being inured to such things by life on the farm and being delighted to earn enough to eat with a fair degree of regularity, I accepted the conditions with eagerness.

The present automobile speed gives one a very poor idea of the trials of travel by team. Nowadays the country doctor whizzes into the country at reckless speed and comes back faster. Doctors are notorious speed fiends. I recently rode with a doctor at a speed of seventy-five miles an hour on a road that averaged seven curves a mile. The reason? None whatever—it is just the small-boy hangover. It is a trite question when one sees a speeder, even a doctor, to ask what he will do with the few minutes saved by the excessive speed. The answer is the same in all cases—nothing. It was even so in the horse and buggy days. Some doctors dashed about with fine teams with much show. In such cases one could be sure that he was not going very far and for no great purpose. Such things did not fool the



public for very long. Some other doctor who had preceded him in the community and employed the same antics, having proved unreliable after a time, the public remembered and classed the newcomer in the same category. It is interesting to note how the psychology of a man could be judged by the way he held the lines. A friend of mine, a most excellent horseman, used to remark to me that I did not drive; I just herded the horses along. That was exactly correct, but long drives do not permit driving a team.

Generally a speed of seven miles an hour was good time for a team in cold weather and good roads. In muddy roads, when a horse cannot exceed a walk, three miles an hour is average time. A mule will walk unmolested two and a half miles an hour; if urged he reduces this to two miles and if urged too strongly he may stop entirely and look back over his shoulder to inquire what you are going to do about it. This is one of those questions the form of which carries its own answer: to wit, nothing. On the whole, the mule was the most reliable means of transportation available. The great drawback of mule transportation, as I remember it, was that it was so undignified. For the consulting doctor to arrive drawn by a span of unwilling mules was a very bad start as far as dignity was concerned. Be it remembered that dignity is a very important item to a young doctor—observe nowadays the hospital interns, magnificent, all decked out in white; but after one is established he acts naturally. But even then dignity had on occasion to give way to dependability. Though the mule occasionally backfires he does not run out of gas—no dead batteries, no flat tires. But one must learn to respect his individuality. Some of them have the disposition of a prima donna, and if their feelings are hurt they may repudiate their contract. I remember one eleven-mile trip into the country, which required five hours with a span of mules hitched to an improvised sled. This trip is memorable because as I entered the house the patient called from an adjoining room: "Doc, you are too late." As indeed I was. Perforated appendix was the answer.

The buggy used by doctors was a single-seated four-wheeled vehicle to which one or two horses were attached. The buggy was preferred to a road cart and was used whenever the condition of the roads permitted. It was more comfortable and one could wrap himself up to greater advantage as a protection against wind, rain and snow. When the roads were extremely muddy the road cart had its advantages. The pull on the horse was considerably less and one

could dodge in and out and past mudholes and it was easier to cross fields because one could make short turns. Besides, if one upset it was easy to right the vehicle again.

The use of the road cart had the advantage that one could, in a measure, protect himself; but the seat was a board affair and uncomfortable at best. The chief disadvantage, however, was their insecurity. A sudden lurch of the horse might cause distressing disarrangements of the passenger. For instance, I once rode dozing slumped over in a cart when a large dog attacked my horse. He raised up and gave a sudden lunge forward in an effort to strike the dog. Unwarned and unprepared, this precipitated me completely behind the cart and I found myself sitting flat in the road. Fortunately this unexpected event so surprised the dog that he took to his heels. Had he attacked me, I would have been at a serious disadvantage. Bronchos were seldom hitched to a road cart. They had a way of tying themselves into a knot only to appear outside the shafts and not infrequently wrong end to. One of these little rascals I once had must have had Quaker blood, for as soon as hitched she would lie down and one had to wait until the spirit moved her; but when it did move her she jumped up and started off on a dead run and it was not easy to stick to the smooth board seat. Horseback riding was resorted to only when there were no roads, a condition rare in prairie countries. A road cart permits the use of a lap robe, which is impossible on horseback because the broncho also has ideas of dignity. These animals, it may be mentioned, had a constitutional aversion to much-petticoated ladies and a doctor trying to protect his legs by a blanket was classed in this group, so that the pony precipitated him with promptness and precision. When approaching these sad-eyed rascals, I could imagine them humming to themselves the tune of the lovelorn: "Juanita, I feel that we must part."

The buggy seat was usually from thirty to thirty-six inches long, suitable for seating two persons. This was all right as a seat but it made rather a short bed, particularly for a person afflicted as I am with excessive longitudinality. This made it necessary for me to stick my feet and legs through the top bows into the adjacent atmosphere when in a recumbent position. This was not exactly a graceful pose but sleep thus obtained was better than none. Dignity obviously is less important at night when everybody else is asleep. Of course, on the out trip one could not sleep for long because the team had to be

guided in the proper direction, but on the return trip the team could be depended on to go directly home—that is, some teams. My own horse, after he had been to a place a time or two, could be depended upon to go there unguided and he invariably returned home directly but in his own sweet time, which consisted in making about four or five miles an hour with some stops interposed for viewing the scenery or visiting with a wayside horse. When he stopped, it invariably wakened me and a jerk of the lines started him off at once, sometimes on a dead run for a short distance.

Livery teams were undependable. They were contrary as a species and could not be depended upon to return home unguided. A good many times such a team wandered off and I wakened to find myself in unknown surroundings. On clear nights the North Star gave me the direction and the Santa Fe railway track furnished a guide east and west. One drove until this was reached and then turned right or left as the case might be. On cloudy nights nothing remained but to find a farmhouse and inquire one's way. Usually the bellowing of dogs indicated the location of a house long before it came into view, but those same dogs prevented an approach to the house and it was sometimes difficult to raise the occupant. A bark from the Colt six-shooter invariably got response, albeit sometimes the resident appeared with shotgun in hand to inquire as to the cause of the unseemly disturbance. Once convinced that it was a doctor, help was certain, even to the extent of riding with the doctor to locate a little-used road.

Some teams also had a habit of locating a haystack on the prairie and peacefully feeding themselves until urged on. It was aggravating to wake up when one should be home or on the way to another call, only to find his team peacefully eating hay miles from home, not rarely in a strange environment.

Doctors being dependable drivers, the livery men gave them teams which were unsafe for inexperienced drivers. Moreover, each team had its own specialty in cussedness and one was somewhat prepared for coming events if he knew the team. The two chief specialties were running away and kicking the driver out of the buggy if anything went wrong. Dogs were the common excuse for running away. Most farmsteads had two or three dogs which on long nights were glad to find a belated team to chase purely as a matter of diversion. In such cases one would wake up only to find his team wildly tearing down the road or across the prairie.



Mustang ponies, much used in my time, were the runaway specialists. They were durable, so that they would jog along at a moderate trot hours without end. They were unsuitable because of their size when the road was muddy or the snow deep. The kickers were usually horses bred for carriage service; but having flunked in their examinations for this service they were consigned to work in a livery stable. Fortunately, only one horse at a time would kick. In such event one slid to the side of the seat opposite the kicking horse and could thus dodge the flying hoofs—that is, generally. Only once I was too slow and got an injury resulting in a dislocated cartilage of one of my knees, from the result of which I have never recovered. This knee would be a serious handicap to a pious person.

If two occupied the buggy the problem was more complicated. One day while I was driving a notoriously kicking horse the neck-yoke strap broke, but instead of running as a team would naturally do under such circumstances, the horse stopped, humped up his back and started to kick. My assistant was driving and I was peacefully dozing, but the slight jerk caused by the breaking of the strap wakened me enough to enable me to sense the importance of the humping back of the kicking specialist. The rear curtain being rolled up, with one leap I landed in the road behind the buggy—and landed on my feet. This feat has always given me pleasant memories, for I believe if I had not lived a generation too soon I might have achieved fame on the basketball court.

Next to the bad roads dogs were the common pest. Every farmyard had several, at least one of which was a big Newfoundland. Sometimes these dogs lay in wait along the side of the road. The team, sensing this, might turn sharply around, threatening to upset the buggy or take off across the adjoining field. Others would dash out of the barnyard, causing the team to go down the road on the dead run. If the frightened team ran straight ahead, leading the dogs, there was no difficulty; but if the dogs outdistanced the team and jumped at the noses of the horses and they swerved too sharply, the buggy was upset and then there was pandemonium right; or even if the team took across an adjacent field they might encounter farm machinery or ditches of unpleasant depth. It was necessary to educate the dogs. Some of them would take the hint if a carefully placed bullet were planted at their heels. The more persistent had to be treated more roughly. Three of this species chased me one night when my assistant was driving. The next day there was one. Some

dogs bear a charmed life. One large Newfoundland dog was an example of this. Despite his size and despite my careful work with both revolver and carbine, this dog died of old age.

One dog presented an unusual problem. He was a very large brindle dog who acquired the ability to jump on the side of a horse and grab the check ring and hang on. A big dog hanging on the harness, of course, excited the horse to frantic efforts. A bouncing buggy and a plunging horse with a dog hanging on him presented a mark that even a revolver expert dare not risk. Try as I might, I could not get a shot at that dog before he landed on the horse. One fine Sunday afternoon, having a driver and armed with a carbine, I was looking for him. There he was standing some twenty feet from the kitchen door inspecting the weather, not at all interested in doctors and their horses. I was a bit peeved at his unseemly indifference, so I got out of the buggy and lay down in the grass and with a nice elbow rest planted a carbine bullet behind his front legs. Illegal, of course, but I failed to find a statute granting permission to any brindle dog to scare the daylights out of a sleepy doctor's team. At any rate a doctor often must operate in the face of a doubtful prognosis.

When afoot these big dogs sometimes were a real menace. One night when I was walking down a road a dog, known throughout the neighborhood as dangerous, came tearing out and made a dive for my throat. I parried his dive with the instrument bag I was carrying and as he started to fall backward I placed a bullet in his chest, from my six-shooter, shooting from my hip. That was fast and fine shooting and no audience to acclaim it.

But there was a lighter vein. When the roads were good I occupied my time by reading or by shooting at wayside objects or jack rabbits. I was then interested in biology and read most of Lubbock's books and really learned Flower's *Osteology of the Mammalia* while riding the long weary hours. Bones of all sorts of animals were plentiful and my buggy contained a fair-sized museum of comparative osteology. Insects and butterflies were collected as occasion required. I got what I then considered a fair reading knowledge of French by study done wholly in the buggy. What I then thought was a fair reading knowledge is right. I learned later, when I had the advantages of a native tutor, that one can never learn French sitting down, one hand occupied with holding the lines. The reason

is the same as why a one-armed man never makes a good clothing salesman.

Reading was interspersed with shooting with both six-shooter and Winchester. Fence posts furnished the usual mark as the team jogged along. I have fired as many as five hundred rounds on a single trip. Jack rabbits, prairie dogs and owls furnished variation. I had a friend, an excellent rifle shot, who used to pair with me on some of these trips. I would shoot under a jack rabbit with my 40-82, throwing him a yard in the air. He lit running and my friend would shoot him on the run with a small rifle.

Such diversions lessened very much the tedium of reading on long trips. Much of my reading was so done, not a good thing for the eyes, and this practice much aggravated my hereditary migraine.

Usually driving was just plain wearisome work, but trials and even dangers sometimes attended these country drives. A few specific instances may be mentioned in illustration. One night I had to cross a considerable stream which had a low water bridge. As I crossed on the out trip the water was just flowing over the floor of the bridge. When I returned, after several hours, the bridge was no longer visible but I estimated the water had risen only about a foot, which would permit easy crossing. But my horse had other ideas. He positively refused even to approach the water, so I turned, or rather he turned, around and came home by a circuitous route. Some days later an occurrence in a neighboring town caused me to go and inspect that bridge. It was gone. The occurrence just referred to befell a young doctor who tried to cross a bridge that was not there and he was drowned. This same horse of mine saved me on two other occasions. One of them occurred in one of my first trips when roads were strange to me. The water was even with the bridge but the approach on the opposite side was under water. I urged my horse to go through but he refused, so I backed off the bridge and sought another road. After the flood subsided I chanced to cross the bridge and discovered that the approach was eight feet below the level of the bridge. Had I tried to cross this flood it would certainly have been disastrous. I am a most excellent wader but eight feet is a bit beyond my capacity.

Dog trainers have a saying that in order to train a dog one must know more than the dog. In order to drive a horse in dangerous situations one must know more than the horse. I soon learned that in intelligence in dangerous situations my horse knew more than I



and I always deferred to his judgment. One night he jumped a washout of a bridge approach which was fully six feet wide and fifteen feet deep. He cleared it together with the front wheels of the buggy but the hind wheels fell into the water; yet he dragged the wheels to safety after they had fallen some distance in the water. On a pitch-dark night finding myself in a buggy horizontal to the earth's surface nearly scared the daylights out of me. My patient lived a very short distance from the bridge and his father had expected to warn me not to cross. He had intended to guard the bridge with a lantern but I came sooner than expected.

My patient on this occasion was a small boy with an abscess in his neck. Obviously it needed opening. I placed my instrument bag on the table and proceeded to inspect its contents. I went to sleep while doing so—it must have been but momentarily; I closed my bag and went back to town, by another road, needless to mention. When I awoke the next morning I remembered that I had not opened that abscess. I hastened back to do the necessary operation. The family thought that after looking in my bag I found I lacked the necessary instruments and had gone back to town after them. They did not realize that I had gone to sleep. This instance illustrates the placidity of a weary country doctor. Within fifteen minutes after being frightened stiff by the fall of the hind part of the buggy into the water, I went to sleep hunting for instruments with which to open an abscess.

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## *Establishing a Country Newspaper*

by E. W. HOWE

[Edgar Watson Howe was left to shift for himself at the age of eleven, learned the printer's trade and acquired an education while working on newspapers in the Middle West. In his middle twenties he bought the *Atchison Globe*, which he made internationally famous and at one time the most quoted paper in America. In 1882 he printed in his own plant *The Story of a Country Town*, an epoch-making novel in the history of American fiction.]

WHEN I WENT TO ATCHISON it was a town of 12,000, and had many bright men; most country towns are drained dry of their best men

by the cities, but Atchison in the old days had aspirations and prospects. It had been headquarters of the Ben Holliday stage line, and of freighting to the West: the early trails from California, Colorado, and Montana led to Atchison, and many of the big buffalo and Indian tales were first told there. It had a railroad before Kansas City, and was an interesting, promising place with history and "characters," including a gang of the most noted three-card monte men in the West.

Oscar Wilde drifted in as a lecturer. I disliked him before he arrived, and dislike his memory to this day, and my "interview" with him was unfriendly. Bob Ingersoll appeared, and, as he read his lecture, I have never been able to understand his great fame as an orator.

I often say now that the best "shows" I have ever seen I saw in Atchison. Frank Daniels appeared in "The Electrical Doll" in a hall over a livery stable. I have been familiar with most of the funny men of my time, and none of them equaled Frank Daniels. I saw Jeffreys Lewis in "Forget-Me-Not," and she is the greatest actress in my memory, although I have witnessed performances by Sarah Bernhardt in Paris, and by Ellen Terry in London. I saw Fay Templeton in "The Mascot" when she was a young, slender and beautiful girl; later I saw her in a big town when she was so old and fat as to be almost a caricature. Country people are not so much out of the world as is believed by those who have always lived in cities.

Newspapers are always unpopular, however good they are, and we made fun of our competitors. One was Republican and the other Democrat, and made much of politics, usually ridiculous, and we exploited the ridiculous side. I think we were actually making money in a month. I had been deeply in debt in Golden and Falls City, but never was in Atchison; it was the most curious, fortunate accident in the history of newspapers. I never had any trouble making money in Atchison, but, owing to carelessness, had trouble keeping it.

The town had a great man everybody picked at. We soon discovered this, and picked at him, too, but always with good-nature, for there was really no harm in him except vanity.

One of our best sources of "copy" was to pretend to receive letters from readers. These we actually made up, being familiar with the ridiculous letters sent to established newspapers. Then we invented imaginary controversies. We did particularly well with a

series of letters from an imaginary hired girl, who told of her ambitions, her distresses, and the woman for whom she worked. Jim represented the hired girl, and did well: he had the better side, for I soon tired of replies from employers of hired girls, and tried a young man who wanted to marry our correspondent. But Jim would have nothing to do with him, unless properly introduced, as the young woman he represented had an Uncle Amos who had been an alderman, and she would not take up with strangers except with proper introduction.

In every town there are men able to write well, and we soon attracted their attention. One contributor was anonymous: I have always believed he was a Catholic priest, but am sure he was one of the best writers I ever knew anywhere. He worked for us faithfully for some months, tired of it, and I do not know yet who he was.

One man started a controversy which ran fiercely for weeks: "Why Does Not God Kill the Devil?" It seems a fair if delicate question, and I thought it very original and clever. A vicious, active fiend has been in mischief many centuries. Why does not the all-powerful God kill him? I discovered many years later that the question was asked as far back as Daniel DeFoe: Friday asked it of Robinson Crusoe.

In all my newspaper life I have benefited largely by bright acquaintances. In Atchison there was a negro called Parson Twine, as black as midnight, but very original. Every time I met him he said something in which there was a suggestion, and I quoted him so frequently that he became famous locally: sometimes I credited him with bold things I did not care to father myself. He liked it so well that for years he devoted his spare time to thinking up what he hoped were wise sayings. I have heard Ralph Waldo Emerson knew a carpenter he cultivated because of his wisdom; all writers are mere reporters of what they hear and read. I knew railroad men who not only brought me butter and eggs from the country, but thought up things for me while out on their runs; there was scarcely a citizen who did not occasionally say something worth while, if properly edited. One young Irishman could analyze humanity almost as well as Nietzsche, although I do not believe he ever read a book, or wrote a line. But how he could think and talk!

My half brother Jim, then about thirty, was a quiet, reserved man, and could not work on the streets, so I did all this. I was able to solicit advertising, job work and subscriptions while getting news,



and, on returning to the office, was business manager. This was the method I was compelled to learn, but did it easily, and kept it up all my life on *The Globe*. In a little while we ran the paper four times through the job press, and had four pages. I was not only business manager, editorial writer, managing editor, paragrapher, advertising solicitor, circulation manager, and type-setter occasionally, but wrote the society news. Once a milliner complained to me of a customer who was unreasonable, and I wrote a "hint" item about it, later discovering I had criticized my own wife.

Men of the craft marveled that I did it, but I never found the system difficult. And it was very effective. Long after we had a three-story building of our own, perfecting press and type-setting machines, farmers would pay their subscriptions only to me, as a result of the old system, and it became a nuisance. We had subscription clerks, but the farmers would force their way into my private office, and I was compelled to take them out to the proper department. When we were getting out a considerable paper, advertisers wanted me to write their advertisements, and mourners their death notices. All the petty complaints came to me; about the police court, the carriers, of which I knew nothing.

An old fellow came up to me on the street the other day, and said:

"*The Globe* never mentions me without telling my age. It is very offensive; I wish you would stop it."

I said to him he knew I had not been on *The Globe* in more than ten years, and had no connection with it.

"Yes, I know," he replied, "but you started it. You can stop it. I wish you would."

Recently a woman came out to my home to make a row because she had been refused credit at *The Globe* office. She kept saying: "I was always your friend: whatever the others say, I stood by you," and I couldn't get in a word to explain that I had not been in the office in months, and had nothing to do with it. I dread to go down town now because of people I meet who say they were always my friends, as though all the others had been my enemies.

In my active days, I knew every man, woman and child, black and white, in Atchison, but could not remember names. This failing was a constant source of trouble. A farmer I had known for years would pay me his subscription on the street, and I could not remember his name. If I acknowledged I could not, he did not like

it. There was a hardware man named Perry Hayes who knew everybody, and usually I was able to describe the farmer so accurately to Perry that he could name him, but frequently I credited the wrong man, and this made more trouble.

One of the vivid memories of my life is of the first days I went on the streets of Atchison as a reporter and solicitor for *The Globe*, and one of the reasons I have loved the town devotedly fifty years is that everyone received me kindly. There was a noted man called the Old Spider, and I dreaded to meet him, but he welcomed me cordially, and I was his devoted friend for life. He was a railroad lawyer, and that may explain why I have always been a friend of the railroads. When he ran for State Senator, I howled for him in *The Globe* until I was almost ridiculous. He promised great shops for the town; why should I not be for him? I was denounced at public meetings for supporting the railroad candidate, but he won triumphantly.

A curious incident in the history of that campaign is that the Old Spider asked the railroad company for \$500 with which to pay *The Globe* for its services. When the money came, *The Globe* was doing its best, so he used it in paying other campaign expenses. Two of his partners afterwards told me they thought I received it, but I never did: I knew nothing about it until many years later. I never knew anything about the corruption in newspapers so commonly reported. No advertiser ever tried to influence me because of his patronage: I was always independent—sometimes too much so. The Old Spider once said to William Allen White (as Mr. White reported in the *Emporia Gazette*):

“They say I ‘run’ Ed. Howe. The facts are, he runs me.”

He always consulted me in his railway campaigns, as he consulted most of the other citizens. And I never supported anything I did not believe was for “the good of the town”; and was often mistaken, for the Old Spider never built the shops he promised. For a good many years he made big promises, and never kept one of them, although I have no doubt he tried to. I never knew of a corrupt gang robbing the town; all the mistakes I have known in town building have been due to ignorance, extravagance, or carelessness, and not to corruption.

Our first newspaper press was a second-hand country Campbell, still in use in a weekly newspaper office in Kansas; with an occasional new part, these presses last forever. We operated this by hand power,

and I frequently took a turn at the wheel, in addition to my other duties. One of our main dependents for motive power was a printer known as "Little Ed," who set type all day, and then turned the wheel of the Campbell when the paper came off, for extra pay: we had good printers who did not average more than two dollars a day. The modern linotype operators certainly average five times that, and many of them make much more.

In course of time we disposed of the job office, and lost the profit from printing sale bills, so I persuaded the farmers to advertise their sales in the paper. In a little while no sale bills were printed in the town; we had all such business as display advertising in the newspaper.

This encouraged me to extend the idea to political advertising; candidates also had a habit of tacking up posters everywhere on telegraph poles and barn doors. A man named John Taylor had an ambition to be sheriff, and I arranged with him to run a series of display advertisements in *The Globe*. I prepared the copy, and in a little while his advertising was the talk of the county, as I was interested, and put my heart into it. He was nominated, and then I repeated the performance in the election campaign, winning easily, although he was a Democrat, with seven hundred natural majority against him. This attracted so much attention that thereafter we had a large amount of display political advertising, and it has continued ever since.

A Democrat named Allaman wished to be mayor, and arranged with me to be his advertising agent: he made no suggestions whatever, and let me conduct the campaign in my own way. As a Democratic member of the legislature he had offered a bill separating the whites and blacks in the public schools, and was very unpopular with the large colored population. My first advertisement was a full page, and in it he declared he wanted no negro to vote for him: I knew the negroes were all against him, anyway, and believed it a good idea.

The negro problem was a very annoying one. A fine old southerner lately deceased had been sued by a colored woman for a part of his estate, with the claim that she had been his common-law wife, a piece of impudence I was very disagreeable about. The people joined me in this indignation, and I stirred up the whites considerably with Allaman's advertising. The politicians thought I was committing suicide for my candidate, but he was elected by a large



majority. His name was signed to all the advertisements, but I wrote them. Later every candidate took space in the *Globe*, although I quit writing the copy.

During one presidential campaign a few years ago, I noted that all the big newspapers and periodicals of the country contained display advertising for the candidates: I have always claimed that I started the system. At first it was adopted in near-by towns, the circle gradually enlarging until finally it appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Vogue*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and every other important publication. Editors have no special reason to admire me, but advertising agents of newspapers have benefited somewhat from my activities.

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## *Notes for an Autobiography*

by CHARLES B. DRISCOLL

[Charles B. Driscoll was born and grew up near Wichita, Kansas. He worked on a number of newspapers before going to New York, where he headed a newspaper syndicate and wrote the newspaper column "New York Day by Day." He was the author of a number of books.]

... IN THE HOME in which I grew up there was a Bible, and there were two thick books that had been bought from book-agents, many years before I was born. The book on which I cut my teeth was *Great Events of Our Past Century*, a collection of articles in high-flown language, covering the supposedly important events of the first century of the Republic. It was issued at the time of the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876, nine years before my birth, and already had served as tooth-cutter and propper-upper for at least six children before me. It was read aloud to my father by my mother on long winter evenings, and I used to sit on Mother's lap and howl when she read the harrowing details of the Battle of Antietam and the shooting of Alexander Hamilton by Aaron Burr. The other book was issued shortly after the Civil War, also by subscription, and was entitled *Men of Our Time*. It carried the byline of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It was, I judge, just a pot-boiler which she tossed together in order to capitalize upon

her fame at that time. It was dull and badly written. But it contained biographical sketches of nearly every prominent politician of the Civil War era.

These three books I read, re-read, devoured. I found the Bible far the most interesting, the best written, the most easily understandable. It was a Douay-Rheims version, padded out with hundreds of thousands of words of dull footnotes, interpretations, theological discussions, introductions and historical essays. The whole was bound up into a huge, unwieldy volume with heavy board covers, highly gilded, and it occupied a little table all by itself in the parlor. The parlor was not for everyday use. It had a brussels carpet in red and tan, with large flower motif, and it had wallpaper in gilt and tan. It had a red center table, besides the Bible table, and on the center table were the photograph albums. The parlor windows were kept closed, and the shades and heavy draperies were drawn. Great maple trees that Father had planted when he was a young man, newly come to Kansas, shaded that side of the house, so the parlor was always cool, even in the hottest weather. It was reserved for funerals, of which we had had two within my memory, and for Sunday visitors.

Yet I was allowed to go into the parlor to read the Bible. Because I spent so much time reading the Bible, down on the carpet on my belly, Mother thought I might be headed for the priesthood. I am afraid she may have mistaken the cool invitation of the exclusive parlor on hot summer afternoons for a call from God. I had no intention of studying for the priesthood, but I did become completely immersed in the lofty language of St. Paul, in the resounding music of the Psalms, and in the simple narrative of the Acts of the Apostles. Without trying to commit anything to memory, I found these great words and phrases singing themselves in my memory as I hoed watermelons, rode herd on the cattle, or gathered grapes in the vineyard. I was always barefooted in summer, and far into the chilly autumn, and my feet were tender. Bruised and bleeding they were much of the time, and there was no time for anyone to worry lest I contract lockjaw. But I forgot the burning and stinging of my feet when I remembered the magical phrases of that eloquent lawyer, Saul of Tarsus.

I still have that Bible in my library, for Mother decreed long before her death, that when the home should go the way of homes, and all the children should be scattered into homes of their own,

the family Bible should go to me. Little else did I salvage out of the wreckage.

Since leaving school I have made my living as a writer and editor, with a bit of public speaking tossed in from time to time. I talk often to collegians and students of literature, particularly to those who are striving to learn to write. I always make acknowledgment of my debt to the Bible, and specifically to the Epistles of St. Paul. I believe that Paul had more influence upon my style of writing than any other writer. Next to him came Tolstoy and Brand Whitlock, both of whom I read while in prep school.

The *Great Events of Our Past Century* was too badly shattered to be salvaged from the wreckage of our farm home when finally the breakup came, but I ran across a coverless copy in a second-hand bookstore a few years ago, bought it, and had it bound. *Men of Our Time* I have never thought worth hunting for in the second-hand shops.

There was in our home, stowed away in a drawer in John's bedroom, a *Bible History* which had been a text in some school. Since it was John's property, it was to be read with great care and respect, and not read too much. But I found it boring and childish anyway. I read it two or three times, got my Mother to ask me all the questions in fine print at the ends of the chapters, and, when I could make a grade of one hundred on it, gave it up and put it back in John's drawer. The Bible itself was much more interesting than this rather florid religious tract, which seemed always trying to prove something.

There were a few textbooks in the house. There were eight of us children in all, of whom I was the youngest but one. Two, Stephen and Katie, had died in childhood, while going to school. Six grew to manhood and womanhood.

So the readers and histories that had been used by the others were, to some extent, available as reading matter. At that time and place parents bought textbooks used in the schools. There was a store in Wichita called the Rock Island Book Exchange, and here it was possible to exchange last year's textbooks for this year's, by paying something extra for the new books. A good deal like trading in a used car on a new car. The second-hand books were then sold for small amounts, or exchanged for other second-hand books. Mr. McKinney, who ran the store, never seemed to accumulate much money, but I thought him the richest man in the world, because his



walls were covered with bookshelves that were crowded with books. It was there that Van bought second-hand math texts, and later I found ways of patronizing the store myself. When I was selling watermelons and apples, which I used to haul to town when I should have been in school, I used to sneak around to McKinney's store and pretend to be about to buy something, just so I could smell the intoxicating odor of those living books. What dreams of book-lined walls I used to dream then! How I used to drive home, sleepy and bemused in the late afternoon, having been hard at a man's work since one o'clock in the morning, thinking how I would one day sit and write in a great, long room, with beautiful books in glass cases, from floor to ceiling, all the way around.

Naturally, we had to take good care of our schoolbooks, so that they would have the best possible trade-in value after the school year was up. But from time to time the texts were changed by some mysterious powers. It never occurred to us to suspect that maybe some book publisher had got next to the state school authorities and had forced the changing of texts so that the publisher could sell a few train-loads of otherwise unsalable books. When these changes were made, the old texts were not exchangeable, and I was always secretly glad, because there was a book that we could keep in the house. Unless, of course, it should turn out to be an arithmetic, in which case I felt sorry for my parents because they had to spend money for such awful books. Arithmetics were always bound in hateful colors and designs, and I could tell one of them as far as I could see it. I could not sleep with an arithmetic in the room, and I'm sure that weakness still is with me, though it is many years since I have tried going to sleep near any mathematical text.

The older girls, Marie and Margaret, had between them a well-worn copy of Barnes's *School History of the United States*. It was a wonderful book, easy to read and understand, even before I started to school. There was a fine picture of General Phil Sheridan crying "Turn, boys, turn—we're going back!" We had a neighbor who had campaigned with Sheridan. I used to be utterly silent in his presence, for he was a part of history. He had been with Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley. I flattered him by assuming that he was one of the boys in the fleeing army that Sheridan was rallying at the point of his cavalry sabre. Mr. Ed Horner was silent on that question, but

he was voluble in his descriptions of the havoc they wrought in the Valley.

In the presence of Mr. Horner, and indeed in the presence of any person, I was a peace-loving lad, quiet and fair-spoken. But I led a secret life of derring-do, replete with the shedding of blood. I used to have a sabre that I had fashioned out of a bit of pine board, and a horse made of a long stick. In the deeps of the sunflower patch west of the house I found a valley, and I laid it waste in a dashing manner indeed. I would gallop the twenty miles to and from Winchester in ten minutes flat, waving my sabre, lopping the heads off the small sunflowers, and crying in wild treble, "Turn, boys, turn; we're going back!" I would say to my orderly, whom I could see clearly enough, though he was not visible to any other, "Come on, Mr. Horner, we'll kill everybody we meet!"

I will never forget my first books. I was just seven when Van came to me and said, "Say, we're too old to play with trains and such things any more. Let's tell Mother to get us books for Christmas this time. You know that this Santa Claus business is all foolishness, don't you? Well, it is, and Mother is the one that buys the presents. Come on, let's tell her to make it books. How are we ever going to learn anything if we don't start now?"

I agreed about the books, but refused to believe the anti-Santa Claus propaganda. I told Mother to tell the good saint to bring me books. Something about adventure, Indian fighting or exploration.

That was a glorious Christmas, though by Christmas Day Van had demonstrated the Santa Claus fallacy for me by taking me up to Margaret's room and showing me the books we were to get as presents. Santa Claus was well lost for those bright books!

They are in our library still, rebound and sedate. Whoever is interested in exploration might do worse than dig up *Notable Voyagers* by Kingston and Frith, published in London by Routledge in 1892. It had an exciting red cover on it when it was new, with a stamped picture of Columbus landing on San Salvador.

The other book, *Adventures by Sea and Land*, by T. S. Arthur (the author of *Ten Nights in a Barroom*), published by Worthington, New York, in 1891, had a picture, in red, of a ship afire at sea, on the front cover. It was full of grand tales of adventure, fighting savages, starvation in the desert, and other glorious stuff. When bedtime came on Christmas night, I had read its 192 pages through for

the first time, but during the ensuing year I read them over and over again, until I had many of the stories committed to memory. . . .

During those years when I was going to the one-room country school and sitting under the tutelage of imperfectly trained school-teachers for two or three months each winter, when the weather was too bad for farming, I was doing a good lot of reading. Much of this reading was of a miscellaneous character, since my hunger for knowledge made me read everything that came to me in print, and to seek more and more printed matter. I read a great deal that I did not understand.

Dr. Fordyce, our family physician, was a great help toward mental health and development. His sons, Don and Joe, were about the respective ages of Van and me. They had the advantage of reading in a literate home, and we clung to them and appreciated them. They, on the other hand, liked the woods, the river and the animals of the farm, and often visited us for a day or a week at a time. They were both readers. Don was deaf. Joe, who was my age, was nervous, excitable, energetic, and stuttered a little bit. Their father was a helpful intellectual companion for the boys, and also took great interest in my all-consuming intellectual curiosity.

My first night away from home was spent in the Fordyce home on North Lawrence Avenue. To me it was a palace, with all the glamour that the pants-pressers have tried to put into the stars' bedrooms, with the sunken bath tubs, bearskin rugs and triple-size beds. It was really an old-fashioned house, with very high basement of brick and two-and-a-half story super-structure of frame, and a lot of 1880 gingerbread jigsaw work all over. Back of the house was the stable, in which was kept the Doctor's team of bay trotters and the buggy in which the Doctor made his calls throughout the countryside.

The Doctor was a Scotchman with sideburns and a long nose, used for a speaking trumpet. The Doctor's nasal voice was a wonder. You should hear him sing "Kathleen Mavourneen," accompanying himself on our piano, when he came out to see some sick member of the family.

Well, the Doctor knew something about boys. His sons already had loaned me Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* and a book that was written to take advantage of the Verne



market, *The Log of the Flying Fish*. Other books, too, they had helped me get hold of.

The occasion for the weekend visit in the city was Wichita's first street fair and carnival. The street fair was rather a new idea in America. It had been imported from Europe, and it was really thrilling to see the arch that had been built across Main Street, all lighted up, and with a whirling disc of light on each side of the center. The little town was crazy with the carnival spirit. Well, it is something that passed away along with the simple life in America. The customers tossed confetti at one another and really enjoyed it. Not at all in the same spirit in which bored celebrants at night clubs throw tape and streamers across the tables.

I had half a dollar to spend at the carnival. I believe admission was a dime and you could stay as long as you liked, with an extra dime for each sideshow. With the Fordyce boys, I spent one evening at the fair. It was the first evening's entertainment I had ever had, and I was enchanted. Street fakirs were selling "the little returning ball—it always returns—it never fails to come back!" A small, hollow rubber ball on the end of a rubber band. It has been revived as the craze of New York and Harlem during the last few years, and called *hi-li*. At that time it was called by the fakirs "innocent street fair fun and amusement for women and children," and sold for a nickel. I had one, and was captivated by the fun one could have by shooting at girls you had never seen before, and making them laugh and squeal. I am sure no greener, more yokelish country lad was on the street in that country town that night, and certainly none had greater fun.

That night I went to bed with a new kind of weariness. I had often been tired from work, but never before from fun. I could hardly find the great, high, well-furnished bed that had been prepared for me, and for months afterward I marveled that one could enjoy being tired as much as I did that night.

Next day Joe suggested that we visit "Papa's office" in the Getto Block. We found Papa in a most cordial mood. I saw him give Joe a dollar, and we left at once to visit the Public Library, on the top floor of City Hall. While I was getting myself soaked in thrills by reading the backs of the small collection of books, Joe was buying for me a year's ticket to the library. Since I lived outside the city I was not entitled to free use of the books, but was admitted to all privileges for one dollar a year. I have never received a present of

such great value since, nor one that I have appreciated more. I immediately drew out a volume of Jules Verne containing *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, and the street fair no longer existed for me. I read the book through at the Fordyce home that day, returned it next day, and went home starry-eyed after my first over-night visit to the big city, another Verne volume under my arm. I did not cease drawing Verne books until I had read every one of them.

Now I would have a definite advantage over Van. I would out-strip him in the only contest either of us took seriously. It never mattered to us which could run faster or jump higher, but we had fought a bloody feud since babyhood over which had read the most books and got the most out of them. Each of us kept a list of books read. Out in the potato patch, under the cruel August sun, I would say, "I've read anyway two or three more books than you have, and when I finish this one I'll be four ahead of you."

"You're a liar, and I'll prove it!" Van would say. Then I would hit him, he would hit back, and we would be down in the dirt, beating each other up until we'd see Dad coming afar off, plowing out another row of potatoes for us to scratch out and pick up.

"I'll name and you name!" one of us would say. The theory was that if you couldn't name the book and author you had just as well not have read it, so it didn't count. We would start off, each one in turn naming a book he had read. It was agreed that no book should count as read unless you had read every word in it, including the title page, preface, introduction, and footnotes. When I really began to edge a little ahead of Van in number of books he read, he would cheat a little. Once he named the Bible.

"You're a liar!" I shouted. "You never read the Bible clear through, with all those begats, and you are lying about a holy book and you will go to hell!"

He would be on me with a punch to the jaw, and I would be at his throat with both hands. Rolling and punching, yelling and scratching, we battled for literary supremacy.

Once Van even named *Life at West Point* as a book he had read. I railed and jeered at him, for hadn't I seen him reading *Life at West Point*? It was nothing but a long magazine article! He grinned and admitted the fraud, but maintained that it was just as long as some of the ten-cent books on my list. I told him he was simply losing out, a veritable ignoramus who had read practically nothing

but a lot of arithmetic books, and he called me a consumer of greenback novels.

I still have in my library a good many of the books I had during the first eighteen years of my life, though the most valuable of them have disappeared. I find in the back of my first book the fly-leaves all taken up with my official list of that era. I do not know exactly what period it covered, but certainly it was before the time of the library ticket, for it lists only thirty-two books, including seven by Washington Irving, four by James Fenimore Cooper, only one by Verne and one by Dickens. But the list contains the name of one of the most important books I ever read, *Lectures on English Literature*, by Maurice Francis Egan. It is the twentieth book on the list, and I have always considered myself lucky to have had a chance at those lectures before I had gone far with my reading.

Margaret was attending school with the nuns in Wichita, driving back and forth in a one-horse, two-wheeled cart that had been bought for \$16 a few years before to supply John a means of transportation to and from the sessions of the Southwestern Business College, where he had become a great penman. Margaret's nuns didn't run a convent. Nothing so fancy. They were Sisters of St. Joseph who taught the parish school in connection with the Pro-Cathedral. The school building was a two-story brick building, the first floor of which was divided into several rooms for the grades, and the second floor of which was one large hall. In this hall dramatic entertainments and fairs were held, and a kind of high school was maintained for a handful of girls who could not afford to go to the convent on the West Side. I think tuition was a dollar a month, and Margaret was very thankful for the dollar when Mother dug it up for her, not always on time, to take to the sisters. I can't imagine what the nuns did with such great sums as their tuition must have brought in at this rate, but they seemed to manage.

Margaret's favorite teacher was Sister Mary Ida, who knew good reading matter and strove to instil into her pupils a love for the good things in print. I do not know that I ever saw Sister Mary Ida, but I owe her a great deal. She had a ticket to the Public Library which she loaned to Margaret, so that this country pupil, who came farther to school than any other pupil and seemed anxious to learn, might do some reading when she was not otherwise employed. Well, if you drive a slow horse six miles to and from school, do your home work and help Mother at least a little bit with the housework, you



don't have too much time to do outside reading. So, while Margaret was doing her home work, I read her library books. That was several years before the Fordyce incident which gave me the run of that same library for a year.

It was through the medium of Margaret's borrowed card that I got to read so much Washington Irving. Eventually, I read every word in the set of *Washington Irving's Complete Works*, fat brown volumes in fine print. Margaret was touched by my greed for the books and the manner in which I grabbed the current volume as soon as she came in from school and stayed with it until I was compelled to go to bed or go out and fill up the woodbox.

The Egan book was not a Public Library book, but came out of the small collection that constituted the library of the parochial school. Sister Mary Ida recommended it, and indeed probably required it as a part of the reading of her pupils in English. Maurice Francis Egan was one of the few Irish-American Catholics of the time who might properly be called a great scholar, and the Catholic schools were proud of him. He lived for a great many years after that, was Minister to Denmark during the World War, and died a few years ago at an advanced age, leaving behind him an autobiography. It is entitled *Recollections of a Happy Life*.

I have never seen a second copy of *Lectures on English Literature*. Undoubtedly it is long since out of print, and probably not many people in the whole world know that it ever was written. As a matter of fact, it was not written for book publication. It was a series of lectures delivered at some college or to some club or other. The lectures were not even edited for book publication, for I remember that the author, in poking fun at some silly English novel, quoted the sentence, "She craned her swan-like neck." He proceeded thus: "Now will some one of you beautiful ladies in the audience please crane her swan-like neck, so that we may see how that is done?" I was in basting-stitches with the uproarious humor of it. I laughed my way through the little book, and read it again and again.

Those lectures set me on the track of good literature, rather than bad or trashy or nonsensical literature. After reading that book you could not help recognizing trash in books. I had no well-considered standards to go by. I had no means of knowing what was good and what was trashy reading matter. But that little book of lectures taught me, and I would have been a moron if I had not caught on. As a result of that experience in early reading, I have never had to

waste time wading through tripe novels, unless they were written by my friends. I remember that Margaret looked on with amused approval while I read the lectures and laughed aloud about them. She was telling Sister Mary Ida how her library ticket was doing double duty, and the Sister was delighted, for she was used to poverty and economy, and she had a mission in the world. She worked for salvation according to the rules of her order, but she also was determined to make people love good literature and appreciate the great writers of English. She felt that the dollar a month was earning its way, since the brother at home was getting an education too.

I was too young to take any part in the discussion when the question of English romantic fiction first arose in our home. It was before either of the older sisters had gone to school outside of the Riverside country schoolhouse, and I must have been a mere infant. But I remember the seriousness of the crisis.

A hired man had left after him, when he had finished his tour of duty on the farm, a backless novel entitled *Lena Rivers*. Marie and Margaret confiscated the novel, and started to read it without advertising the fact to the family. A situation already existed, due to the circumstances that Nellie Fahey, a friend of the girls and of the family, had loaned Marie and Margaret her copy of *East Lynne*. Mother had learned that her daughters were reading a novel, and she knew that a novel was a love story. Now, romantic love had never stood very high at our house. The word *love* was one that was never mentioned without something of an apologetic sneer, as one might mention crooners, fairies or lesbians in our own time. Should the daughters of a good, religious household be permitted to read a novel? Mother put the question up to John, who was, next to God and the Bishop, something of an authority. John read *East Lynne*. Nothing could hurt John or sully his good reputation, and he was protected by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. He read *East Lynne* and reported to Mother that it did not seem to him a fit thing for innocent young girls to read.

Mother went to the girls' bedroom and found both of them reading novels. One was at work on *East Lynne* and the other had *Lena Rivers*. Mother took the novels away from them, and the girls cried. Margaret, always an independent spirit, expressed the opinion that she would read novels, and that hell and high water would not stop her, because it was something rather essential to her personal de-

velopment. She intimated that she had a mind of her own and would submit to censorship only when, where and so long as she was compelled by circumstances to do so.

I was talking about this incident to Marie lately. She has daughters now who are much older than she was then, but she remembers that she was never so angry with Mother in her life at any other time as she was when the censorship was clamped down upon her reading, right in the middle of *East Lynne*.

Finally it was decided that the whole literary controversy should be put up to Father Tihen. John Henry Tihen was pastor of the Pro-Cathedral. He was a young priest of German family, serious, holy, but withal sufficiently liberal to drink beer in the forbidden saloons of prohibition Kansas. He was the confessor of the family and a real family friend. In later years he often spent days at the farm, relaxing. He became a Monsignor, Bishop of Lincoln, Bishop of Denver, and died in retirement recently.

John took the story of the defection of his romantic sisters to Father Tihen, and I will always remember his grave demeanor when he reported to Mother, that Sunday afternoon, the result of his interview. Father Tihen had said that he could see no harm in the judicious reading of novels, either by girls or by boys or men or women. He would not commit himself as to the exact morality of the characters portrayed in *East Lynne* and *Lena Waters*, but it was his recommendation that the young ladies be permitted to read those novels and others. He even revealed that college education required a certain amount of novel reading, and he himself had read a good many without harm to his moral structure.

A new birth of freedom was celebrated in our rural home as a result of that decision, handed down so wisely from the court of highest jurisdiction. The novels were given back to the girls, and they read them. But never did they forget that an attempt had been made to censor their academic life. Novels were actually flaunted. Later, both girls read, despite contrary opinions by John and Mother, a most wicked novel by a man named Nathaniel Hawthorne. It was *The Scarlet Letter*, and John protested that such a story could do no one any good. He had read it as unofficial censor before the girls were allowed to get at it, and he reported that it told the story of an unmarried girl who had got herself into such a mess with a preacher that she had to stand up in the Public Square



wearing a scarlet "A" on the front of her dress or something. But Father Tihen had spoken. The girls read Hawthorne.

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# IX.

## Fact and Fancy

*The pioneer spirit tended to belittle present difficulties, often by a ludicrous enlargement, and condemned as weaklings those settlers who pulled up stakes in the face of droughts, grasshoppers, or the inherent hardships of frontier life. Life must have been grim most of the time, but an abundance of evidence indicates that the pioneers took life with a frolic and song. Materials which made for exaggeration did exist and from such materials grow the "tall tale."*

### *The Mythical Jayhawk*

by KIRKE MECHEM

[Kirke Mechem, secretary of the Kansas Historical Society for many years, has written extensively about Kansas, his best-known articles, in addition to the one reprinted here, being on Coronado and "Home on the Range." He has also written numerous plays.]

SEVERAL YEARS AGO that noble myth, the Kansas Jayhawk, was attacked on the grounds that it was attempting to become a real bird. A group of educators had discovered that one of their own textbooks not only told little children that it was real but that it was a native of this region. Faced with this dilemma, the school men naturally appointed a committee. As a result, an open season was declared on the Jayhawk and for a time there was a good deal of excited shooting, principally in the newspapers. When the smoke cleared away it was hard to tell from appearances whether the educators were the hunters or the hunted. Although they claimed they saw feathers fly, the only trophy they brought back was the statement out of the textbook, which they announced they would stuff and mount above the committee-room door. But even this turned out to be not completely dead, and the upshot was that the Jayhawk still perched in the text, metamorphosed, however, once more into a myth.

Comment over the state at the time was not wholly respectful. Some Kansans thought the educators had merely succeeded in taking

each other out snipe-shooting. The mythical Jayhawk, they said, is like the mythical snipe, it always leaves the hunter holding the sack. "All myths," observed one kibitzer, "exist in what it amuses men to believe. The professors will have no more luck killing the Jayhawk than the historians have had with George Washington's cherry tree."

It is of course possible that these school men did not know they were taking on a myth when they attacked the Jayhawk. A little research outside the textbooks would have made them more wary. In the writings of John J. Ingalls, for example, they could have found these words of warning:

"The Audubon of the twentieth century," he wrote, "will vainly search the works of his illustrious predecessor for any allusion to the Jayhawk. Investigation will disclose the Jay (*Cyanurus cristatus*), and the hawk (*Accipiter fuscus*): the former a quarrelsome egg sucker, the latter an assassin of the atmosphere. Were it not that nature forbids adulterous confusion of her types, he might surmise that the Jayhawk is a mule among birds, the illicit offspring of some aerial intrigue, endowed with the most malign attributes of its progenitors. But the Jayhawk is a creation of mythology. Every nation has its myths, human and animal, and they are accepted as facts. Poetry decorates them with its varnish, orators cover them with a rhetorical veneer, and they are incorporated into the literature of the country. There was an epoch when the Jayhawk flew in our troubled atmosphere. It was a bird with a mission. It was an early bird and it caught many a Missouri worm. It did not allow salt to be put on its tail."

Ingalls' last remark might well serve as a warning to all Jayhawk hunters. It is a bird that cannot be caught. Even the names, Jayhawk and Jayhawker, are elusive. They are like the chicken and the egg, nobody knows which came first. The earliest use of



The Jayhawk Banished from the Schools



either word seems to have been in 1849 when a party of adventurers from Illinois, who called themselves Jayhawkers, made the nickname famous in the California desert known as Death Valley. There are references to Jayhawkers in Texas history, which may be of an earlier date, but are not authenticated. The name became common during the territorial troubles and was at first applied to both sides. Jennison's regiment of Free-state men, as well as Quantrill's raiders, were at one time called Jayhawkers. The name finally stuck to the anti-slavery side and eventually to all the people of Kansas.

As to the word Jayhawk, it has now sent several generations of Kansans to the ornithologies. Probably the belief that somewhere the bird had a real prototype will never die. The story of Pat Devlin has always encouraged this hope. Devlin was a native of Ireland, an early immigrant to Kansas. One day in 1856 he was returning home after some private plundering across the Missouri border. When asked what he had been up to, he replied, "You know, in Ireland we have a bird we call the Jayhawk, which makes its living off of other birds. I guess you might say I've been Jayhawking!"

A few years ago Paul Wellman, then of the *Kansas City Star*, thought this was a lead worth following up. He wrote a letter of inquiry to the Library of Dublin. Although the answer was that there is no such bird in Ireland, it was admitted that the name might exist in an isolated locality for some species. At the end of his letter the librarian added, "May I suggest that you inquire if history relates whether the original Pat Devlin was known sometimes to have an inventive turn of mind."

Whether Pat Devlin invented the Jayhawk may never be known. However, it was a happy inspiration, one that appealed to the humorous fancy of early-day Kansans, and they adopted the bird without question. But for many years the myth was strictly an amateur production. The first professional development was in 1932 by Raymond C. Moore, professor of geology at the University of Kansas. Writing in the *Graduate Magazine*, he said:

"Geologists in the Mid-Continent region are familiar with the representative of the class Aves called *Jayhawkornis Kansasensis*. In unscientific parlance this species of bird is familiarly known as the Jayhawk. We may direct attention to what has been designated as one of the most famous yells in America, 'Rock Chalk, Jayhawk.' The close association of Jayhawk and rock chalk in this yell cer-

tainly suggests the possibility that the cretaceous chalk might contain evidence bearing on the Kansas Jayhawk. It is proper to inquire whether there may be avian remains in these chalk beds. It would be too much to hope that we might discover the remains of the original Jayhawk himself, yet nothing seems too remarkable for modern science.

"As a matter of fact, discovery of the Rock Chalk bird is not at all new. Some were found as long ago as 1870, when a paleontologic field party from Yale University made first discovery of ancestral Jayhawk bones in the cretaceous rocks of western Kansas. This bird was given the not unfitting name *Hesperornis regalis*, which means the 'kingly Western bird.' Subsequently other fossil remains have been found, and at the present time there are two remarkably fine mounted skeletons of *Hesperornis* in the Peabody Museum at Yale University, one in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, one in the National Museum at Washington, and a complete specimen in the museum of the University of Kansas.

"A unique feature of the specimen in the University of Kansas collection is the preservation of clear imprints of feathers in the chalk. Thus we know not only the skeletal form but something of the feather covering that clothed his body. Unfortunately, pigment is rarely preserved in fossils, and consequently we have no actual evidence of the coloring of *Hesperornis*. Under the circumstances, however, is it not reasonable to assume that the red and blue of modern *Jayhawkornis* were the hues of the ancient Rock Chalk bird?

"Old *Hesperornis* was a good-sized bird, the skeleton attaining a length of six feet from tip of beak to end of out-stretched toes, and his height in stocking feet was a good four and a half feet. He was a ferocious-looking bird. We see not only the big strong beak, like that of the modern Jayhawk, but we find that the upper and lower jaws were armed with a row of very sharp-pointed teeth. It is perhaps unfortunate that these teeth, inherited from reptilian ancestors, have been lost in the later evolution of the Jayhawk. There are many times when these teeth would come in handy.



Skeleton of *Hesperornis Regalis*,  
Ancestor of the Jayhawk

"In conclusion, it is of interest to point out that the regal birds of the Kansas chalk were very thoroughly adapted to an aquatic life. It is fortunate or unfortunate, according to point of view, that the fossil remains do not permit accurate determination of the size of the brain case, and we cannot, therefore, tell whether there has been development or decline in intelligence during the course of evolution from *Hesperornis* to *Jayhawkornis*."

This is the kind of cool scientific research needed to convert the Jayhawk from an amateur to a professional myth. The Jayhawk is a unique one, one the state should be proud of. It should be capitalized and advertised and mounted on the state-house dome. It should be the trade-mark of Kansas. As an "attention-getter" it has more advertising value than all the wheat, oil, Indians and buffalos in the state put together. Yet as a trade-mark the Jayhawk has been neglected and unappreciated. And as a myth it is still incomplete. Both deficiencies should be dealt with scientifically. To begin with, the myth must be made bigger, better and more unbelievable. For this purpose the scientific method of Mr. Moore's article cannot be improved.

As he suggests, the fossils of Kansas may some day give up the secret of the Jayhawk. There is an unverified story that the Indians believed the great round stones in Rock City in Ottawa county are petrified eggs. The anonymous Indian who made this statement declared they were laid by the Thunderbird. This, he claimed, is the Indian name of the Jayhawk. When asked how any bird known to man could have laid eggs the size of those rocks, some of which are over twelve feet in diameter, his answer was that the Thunderbird, or Jayhawk, not only could change its size at will but could make itself invisible, and was immortal.

This same Indian, who perhaps was invisible himself at the time, declared that the first inhabitants of the Great Plains were Jayhawks. They settled here, he explained, because the land was flat. They flew at such great speed that they needed level runways for landing. When the Jayhawks first came to the plains, he said, all the country was a desert, without water or vegetation, and even without wind. For many moons whenever a Jayhawk wanted a drink he had to fly to the Great Lakes. One hot summer day several million Jayhawks started northeast for water at the same time. The tremendous force of their flight started a strong breeze from the southwest. From that day the wind has never ceased. Since it blew the first



clouds across the plains the Indians always credited the Jayhawk with bringing rain and vegetation to Kansas.

The Spaniards of Coronado's day, of course, were the first white men to hear these stories from the Indians. Full of their faith in the existence of cities of gold and the fountain of youth, they not only believed these tales, but eagerly added scientific observations of their own. The following is ascribed to a famous Spanish ornithologist, now unfortunately apocryphal:

"These incredible birds," he says, "we first saw on Sts. Peter and Paul Day as we crossed the river which lies just below Quivira. They were of all sizes, sometimes appearing in great numbers, then of a sudden not to be seen by the keenest eye, so that the men grew apprehensive, saying they made themselves invisible. This they took to be an omen, but whether for good or ill no one could judge.

"Now that I wish to describe the appearance of these birds it is to be noticed that no two of our soldiers found it possible to agree

in any particular. As it seemed to me, they have a narrow short face, except for the beak, which is long and grotesque, being yellow in color, and curved to a sharp point. The brow of those of the commonest size is two palms across from eye to eye, the eyes sticking out at the side, so that when they are flying they can see in all directions at once. They are blue and red, the feathers shining like the steel of a Toledo sword, iridescent, wherefore it is not possible to say

where one color leaves off and another begins. They have long talons, shaped like an eagle's. These claws are so powerful that many of our men, among which even the priest was one, aver that these birds have been seen to fly off with one of those hump-backed



*Hesperornis Restored*  
(*Jayhawkornis Kansasensis*)



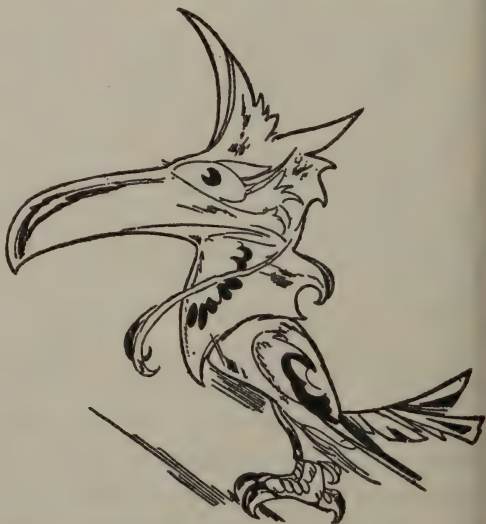
Jayhawk during Mating Season (from  
*Apocrypha of Coronado, ca. 1541*)

cattle in each claw. [He refers to the buffalo.] Some, however, deny this, declaring they have webbed feet. Also there are those who insist, in spite of the laughter of the army, that they have no claws at all but wear great boots extending halfway up to the feathers of the leg. And there are some who say they wear but one boot, this being like those worn by horsemen, with a high heel and long spur, most grotesque as they walk about the prairie.

"However this may be," the Spaniard continues, "there is almost general agreement concerning the tail. This is quite short, being a mere tuft of feathers when these birds are in repose. But in flight, or when running along the ground (where they out-distance our best horses) they carry it erect like a scorpion. The Indians say this tail is poisonous, declaring that in battle they employ it as a weapon, flying backwards, which they do with the greatest ease.

"Because of the hoarse voice of this bird, which can be heard one hundred leagues, our soldiers nicknamed it the Feathered Jackass. This disrespect, without any doubt, was the cause of all our troubles in this land, the least of which by no means was our failure to locate those golden cities. Inasmuch as we had been warned by the Indians that the Guardian Spirit of the Prairies is none other than this bird, it would have served us better to propitiate it, instead, as our ignorance prompted, to offer them these insults.

"There are some who profess to believe," he concludes, "that these are the birds Aristophanes described in his comedy, which, living between earth and heaven, forced tribute from both men and gods. Wherefrom it is argued that the squawking of these prairie monsters was merely a demand for tribute. Rather do I believe them to be a species of the Phoenix bird, generated in fire and brimstone, and never do I cease to offer my prayers of thanksgiving to the Virgin, that I was delivered from their country with a whole skin."



Hen Jayhawk in Spring Plumage

This legendary Spaniard was not the last to consider the Phoenix and Jayhawk identical. Like the Jayhawk, the Phoenix is all things to all men, as well as all sizes. It is described as a "bird of gorgeous plumage, a native of Arabia, and sacred to the sun." Some have said the Phoenix is like the roc of Marco Polo and the *Arabian Nights*, easily capable of making off with a horse. It is most famous, of course, for the fact that it propagates itself in fire, and so makes itself immortal.

This theory that the Jayhawk is a Phoenix has divided scientists into two schools of thought, both fiercely incognito. One asserts that both are able to change colors like a chameleon, that both can assume different shapes and sizes, that both have the power to become invisible, and that they are, therefore, but Eastern and Western species of the genus *mirabile dictu*.

The second school, ignoring the Phoenix, declares that the Jayhawk is merely a variant of the cuckoo. "This myth of invisibility," says one authority, "derives from the well-known fact that the cuckoo is often heard but seldom seen." He quotes Wordsworth's verse: "O cuckoo! Shall I call thee bird or but a wandering voice!" The cuckoo," he says, "is a bird with a loud voice notorious for the fact that it builds no nest of its own but lays its eggs in the nests of other birds. When its young are hatched they eat the food intended for the true nestlings and end by shoving their starving hosts out on the ground to their deaths. Naturally the adult is an evasive bird, but its invisibility is that of a sneak and a coward. Unquestionably the Jayhawk is cuckoo!"

So much for the myths of the ornithologists. Phoenix or cuckoo, the Jayhawk continues to be the Invisible Jayhawks on Their Way to Plant Volunteer Wheat Guardian Spirit of Kansas. As it once defended the territory from bushwhackers it still spreads its protecting wings over the state. The grasshoppers of the great plague of 1874, which disappeared as suddenly as they came, many old-timers assert, were devoured in one night by fledgling Jayhawks. And the miraculous growths of volunteer wheat in barren fields, which over the years have saved

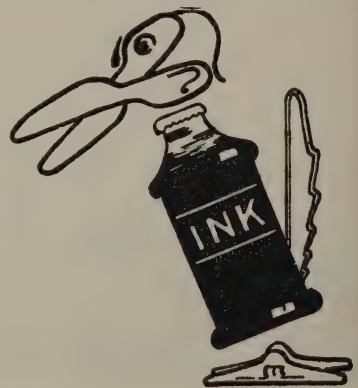


hundreds of farmers from ruin, they will tell you, were drilled there by tiny invisible Jayhawks.

It was the opinion of Dave Leahy, however, that the Jayhawk did not always conduct itself as a feathered Boy Scout should. That Irish Kansan of delightful memory once complained that the Jayhawk was a practical joker and that it had spoiled one of his best hoaxes. Dave at the time was a reporter on one of the Wichita papers. One day toward the end of March he wrote a story about a great flock of parrots which were flying north, following the course of the Arkansas River. The next day he described the vast numbers of the birds and estimated the speed of their flight. Each day the story grew, until, on the 31st, he had the birds approaching Wichita, darkening the sun, and scheduled to reach the Douglas Avenue bridge about seven the next morning.

"I knew the stories had been good," Dave is reported to have said, "but I was astonished the next morning to see hundreds of people waiting on the bridge for the birds to appear. It was April Fool's Day, you understand, and I was chuckling to myself, constructing the lead for tomorrow's story. Then I heard somebody shout, and overhead, would you believe it, about fifty scraggly little birds the size of a sparrow came into sight. For a few minutes they dived around, just long enough to make sure that I'd be taken for a fool or a liar, then they disappeared. Those birds were Jayhawks, the little devils," Dave concluded, "I recognized them. They were jealous that anybody but themselves would try to pull off a practical joke in Kansas!"

It was also near Wichita, apparently, that a Jayhawk was seen last. The following is an army pilot's account, in 1944, of a weird flight "in a B-777, one of the new seven-motor bombers." This plane, strangely enough, had been christened "The Flying Jayhawk." On its fuselage there was a painting of the sponsor, going into action with three pairs of dice. Clutched in its right claw there were a three and a four, in its left a two and a five, while from its beak it rolled out a six and a one. This interview is from the *Wichita Beagle*:



Jayhawk in the Midst of Making a Myth

"We were on a routine flight, returning to Wichita," said the pilot, "loafing along at about 8,000 feet. A little this side of Hutchinson I heard a swishing sound above the roar of the plane. Then something passed us, a sort of shadow, going like a bat out of Hades. As it went by it kind of wailed, though maybe it was more like a loud swoosh. From the sound I figured it for one of those new jet-propelled jobs. Then I heard Sergeant Goober's voice in my ear phone.

" 'Lieutenant! Look!' he yelled. 'It's got feathers!'

"By that time it was too far away for me to make out. But it was plain that it was the biggest and fastest thing I'd ever seen in the air. My heart did an outside loop—laugh if you want to—but for a second it came over me that this was some secret plane the Nazis had suddenly turned loose on us. Then Goober's voice came in again.

" 'Lieutenant!' he said, 'It's stopped!'

"He was right. It had stopped dead, in the air! Then it started backing up towards us, and fast. No time for anything. Yet I still remember thinking in a surprised sort of way, 'Hm-m! Jet propelled both ways! Why doesn't the army tell us these things?'

"At about two hundred yards it stopped again and started forward. Then it let down its left claw.

"Yeah, I said claw! Foot, Leg. Whatever you want to call it. But it wasn't a wheel. That's the only thing the whole crew agrees on. Bright and shiny—yellow—but no part of any normal landing gear. And it kept on letting it down. Every once in a while it would knife up into the air and maybe do a couple of impossible rolls, as if calling attention to itself. Then it would swoosh down and dangle that yellow left claw at us again.

"This kept up till we were over Wichita. But when we approached the airport it zoomed up out of sight. For a second I thought it had left us. But as I circled the field I could hear the swoosh louder than ever and I realized that it was right above us. Then, as I settled in for a landing, Goober came into my ear with a shriek.

" 'Lieutenant! Lieutenant!' he yelled. 'It's sinking its claws into us!'

"My first thought was to give her the gun. Why I didn't I'll never know. Instead, I made a normal landing and the swooshing sound faded away. Then the plane suddenly toppled over sideways. I had landed with the left wheel gone!

"Well, that's my story. If I'm stuck with it so is Goober and the rest of the crew. Goober says this Whatever-it-was looked exactly

like the picture of the Jayhawk we've got on the plane. I wouldn't know myself. You see, Goober is a K.U. man and has funny ideas. Too funny, and could be he's giving 'em to me. What I mean is, when I came out of the hangar, still wiping off the sweat, right in front of me, sitting on a fence, was a bird the size of a wren, exactly the same. Big yellow beak and all, except this one had on boots. I stopped, pop-eyed. The bird looked at me a second then let out a squawk like a Bronx cheer. When he flew off he made a faint swooshing sound, like a baby sky-rocket."

That was the story of the lieutenant, according to the *Beagle*. If this is the stuff of mythology, let us have more of it. As the myths of the Greeks reflected their humor and idealism, the Jayhawk is peculiarly an expression of the spirit of Kansas. Like the state, it was born in adversity and its flight is to the stars. It is a fighting bird, full of the tough humor of the territorial soldiers who first made it their mascot. In France, in the first World War, it gave its name to an all-Kansas regiment. By the end of World War II it had fought three times in the Philippines: first with Funston, again in the bloody retreat on Bataan, and those invisible wings were present, there can be no doubt, when Corregidor was avenged. From Pearl Harbor and North Africa to Iwo Jima and St. Lo the Jayhawk flew with Kansans on every battle front. And when the shadow of its wings fell again on free France they rested on the victorious armies of a soldier from Kansas.

The Jayhawk is a heroic bird, but don't try to treat it like a hero. You might receive a faint swoosh from its exhaust. It is a bird of peace. It is sentimental, and loves to croon strange words to itself at dawn or in a prairie twilight. Poetic words about ripening wheat, and quiet homes on the range, and the purification of politics. Yes, the Jayhawk is heroic, but its heroism was bred in the courage of peace. The courage of a bird that can fly backwards into a dust storm squawking prosperity. The courage of a Phoenix, perhaps, that falls into the fires of adversity only to regenerate itself.

## NOTES

This article appeared in the February, 1944, issue of the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* and was published twice as a pamphlet during World War II. It has been slightly revised in this edition. During the war about a thousand copies were sent to Kansans in the armed



forces overseas. During and after the war the Historical Society learned that a number of planes, jeeps, tanks, landing craft and small ships bore the name "Jayhawk" or "Jayhawker." One plane, an army C-47 in the New Guinea area, was named "Jayhawk II."

As the Spaniards remarked, the Jayhawk is a bird that does not go unnoticed. Lt. Thomas E. Bennett of the Army Combat Engineers wrote in the spring of 1944: "To help spread the 'Spirit of Kansas' in England, I have named my jeep 'Jayhawker.' Now I am confronted with the problem of answering countless questions as to what is a Jayhawk." And Henry Maloy of Eureka wrote that he had a letter in the spring of 1947 from a German schoolboy saying that everybody in his town had seen those "birds with shoes on" while the Americans were there.

A webfooted seagoing Jayhawk was described in the *Kansas Historical Quarterly* for August, 1947. It was the mascot of the *U. S. S. Radon*, a 4,500-ton vessel of World War II, described as the seagoing version of ordnance's heaviest maintenance outfit, the base shop. The commanding officer was a Kansan, Lt. Col. L. R. Whitla. On the forward port and starboard sides of the ship stood guardian Jayhawks eight feet high which carried ordnance bombs under their left wings and monkey wrenches under their right.

This Pacific Jayhawk, Colonel Whitla, wrote, "recruited additional Jayhawks . . . to go aboard the auxiliary craft: a B.T.L., an M.T.L., an L.C.P.L., and a 36-foot yawl, as well as all the motor equipment. . . . The eight-foot



The Seagoing Jayhawk

Jayhawks had the assistance of twenty smaller ones who were in proportionate size according to the size of the craft or vehicle they were to protect. Their job was maintenance." They "kept them rolling." Under their supervision "new lenses for glasses were ground, false teeth repaired, radar and radios rebuilt, X-rays, jeep and tank motors renewed, small arms, artillery, trucks, seagoing boats, put back in action. Even at one time a midget race was manufactured as a training program for the men as well as a pastime."

The pamphlet, it appears, resulted in the addition of two Kansas words to Henry L. Mencken's famous and delightful work, *The American Language*. When a copy was sent to him, he wrote, "I have read *The Mythical Jayhawk* with the greatest delight and would like to quote from it in my book. I am enclosing a copy of my pamphlet, *War Words in England*, just published." In his pamphlet the word "Exodists" was mentioned, as an English synonym for "Evacuees." Mencken's attention was then called to the fact that in the late 1870's the Negro migration to Kansas reached such proportions that it was called the "Exodus" and the immigrants were called "Exodusters." Mencken answered, "Exoduster is quite new to me, and I am certainly delighted to hear of it. I'll slap it into my own record and embalm it in print at the first chance."

Another comment on the Jayhawk came from Boyd B. Stutler of New York. Mr. Stutler is a student of Kansas history and has perhaps the most complete private collection of material in the country relating to John Brown. He wrote:

Back years ago when I was a youngster the term "jayhawk" was quite common in our part of the West Virginia hills, used to describe a raid or as a synonym for the current "hijack." Civil War veterans often used the term "lim, skim and jayhawk 'em," past or present tense, to describe utter annihilation or the rout of a political opponent. Youngsters went "jayhawking" in the water-melon season—and to lift a fat hen from a roost for the Saturday evening mud-bake was another form of "jayhawking."

I have a lot of respect for the bird and the myth; at least he has given us a colorful and highly descriptive term to cover more or less innocent pranks to downright brigandage. Long may he wave.

Henry Maloy, mentioned above, was without doubt the originator of the pictorial Jayhawk, though for a time there was some inclination to give credit to Albert T. Reid. In a letter to the Historical Society, Mr. Maloy explained how he began to put the bird on paper:

... When I enrolled up there [at the University of Kansas] in 1910, there were no Jayhawks in sight. A bulldog was being used to represent the university. I do not know when that bulldog business got started; but at football rallies a bulldog would be led along with the stuffed tiger. I had been bitten by the cartoon bug and so started drawing cartoons in great quantities and putting them on the desk in the *Kansan* office in the morning before any of the staff had got there. The stuff went into the waste basket as fast as I brought it in; but I kept on bringing several a week all through my freshman year. If I had known how bad it was, I wouldn't have kept on doing it. I used half a dozen different things to represent the university while this was going on, but never

thought of using a Jayhawk. To me the term "jayhawk" in the school yell was a verb and the term "jayhawkers" was the noun. The bird implication escaped me. But, as I said, I kept on turning out cartoons and not getting them printed. I started in doing it again the next year, too, and kept it up till the middle of the year when Merle Thorpe, who had just come to take charge of the journalism department, saw one that he thought might be worth printing. He told me to bring my stuff to him and let *him* throw it away, which I did from then on. He was pretty rough and made me draw a lot of them over; but he persuaded the *Kansan* staff to use one a week. By the end of the second year everybody was accustomed to the new order of having a cartoon a week in the paper.

When the football season of the third year opened, Con Squires, a photographer who did most of the student work, brightened up his display window with a stuffed chicken hawk holding a K. U. pennant in its claws. As soon as I saw that, I felt like kicking myself for being so stupid so long. A bird was what we needed instead of those bulldogs, Mother K.U.'s and so on.

The Houn' Dawg Song was popular then; so I decided to have a Jayhawk kicking the Aggie dog aroun'. So that this Jayhawk could get a better kick on the dog, I put human legs and heavy shoes on him. That was in October, 1912—I think October 12 [October 25.—Ed.]. That was the first Jayhawk I had ever seen and, judging from what others told me, it was the first one anybody else had seen around there. It was plain to all of us around the *Kansan* office that we had something; so we all pitched in to get him simplified to where amateurs could draw him quickly, and workable enough so that he could look mad or happy or moody as conditions required by just changing a line or two. Here is what I mean. If the tip of the bill bends down, he will look mad in spite of anything you can do to him. There isn't enough bad news to keep a Jayhawk mad all the time; so we had to straighten the bill out again,—like it had been in that first dog picture.

We tinkered around getting bugs out of him for two years after that. You might say that getting the Jayhawk to where he was a going concern was a four-year job—two years getting a channel opened through which he could be exposed to the general public and then two years more tinkering him up and plugging him by the *Daily Kansan* staff and the journalism faculty. No one person could have put that over. For instance, if Thorpe hadn't got us a chalk plate outfit so that we could make our own cuts cheaply and quickly, we couldn't have made much headway. In case you don't know, you dig your picture in a layer of chalk sticking to a steel plate, then use this as a matrix to cast a cut from. As you dig your picture you blow the loose chalk away so you can see where your steel point is going. This chalk gets all over the room. So this jayhawk came out of chalk as did those bones you mention (*Hesperornis Regalis*).

We left the human legs and shoes on him for two reasons. One was that the shoes were good weapons for slap-stick comedy. (It is lots more fun to see a tiger get a good swift kick in the pants than get his eyes clawed out.) The other reason was that students soon were running around at football games inside of Jayhawks made of wire, cardboard and cloth. They looked just like the cartoons—same kind of legs and all. We had animated cartoons before Walt Disney did. . . .

It was ten years or so after this that a Jayhawk was copyrighted. Research in connection with lawsuits brought out that birds of one sort or another had been used to represent K. U. on postcards, wall posters and at least once in a Kansas City paper as far back as the gay nineties. But nobody ever made more than one and no newspaper ever promoted the idea. That accounts for why they died out.



Other notes on this edition: The quotations from Ingalls and Moore have been condensed, with some sentences transposed. The original articles are: "The Last of the Jayhawkers," in *A Collection of the Writings of John James Ingalls* (Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Co., Kansas City, Mo., 1902), p. 145; "Discovered: Ancestor of Jayhawkornis Kansasensis," by Raymond C. Moore, *Graduate Magazine*, Lawrence, v. 30 (April, 1932), p. 10.

Reprinted from *The Mythical Jayhawk*, Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1956, by permission of the author.

## *The Amazing Story of "Home on the Range"*

by HOMER CROY

[Homer Croy was born on a farm near Maryville, Missouri, and has the distinction of being the first student in the first journalism school in the world, at the University of Missouri. He is the author of many books, some of which have been dramatized for motion picture and stage.]

WHEN I WAS PLANNING the outlines of this book, it seemed to me that "Home on the Range" had the spirit of the early settlers better than any song I had ever heard; so I thought I would "look it up." This I started to do, never realizing what I was letting myself in for. In no time at all I found four states claimed its authorship (Kansas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado) and that it had been written into the *Congressional Record*, by an enterprising congressman, that Colorado was the home of *The Home*. And I found, too, that an authority on the origin of American folklore music had written a magazine article announcing the song had come from Colorado, not only this but giving the names of four men involved; on top of this I discovered that there had once been a half-million-dollar lawsuit to determine the song's authorship. If the song had been written in Colorado, it was out of my country; I was about to drop it, but decided, on an off chance, to write and find some of the details. To my surprise I found them pretty spotted. Even then, I would probably have dropped the whole thing, except one day I heard the song on the radio and it so touched me that I decided to poke around a little more.

I discovered that Arizona was the state that had launched the lawsuit; a man had testified he had written the song under the title

"My Arizona Home." Also in the testimony I found that in the early days the song had been sung as folklore at Stanberry, Missouri. My eyes popped, for I had visited there many times. Uncle Dexter. The song had been sung in the Stanberry Normal (long since gone) and there was an affidavit by a man I had once met. Now I did want to know, book or no book.

I wrote to the Kansas claimant and received a letter from the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, at Smith Center, saying it was well established that Smith Center was the place. But, knowing something of the ways of secretaries of Chambers of Commerce, I sent off a letter to Kirke Mechem, State Historian, at Topeka, and back came an answer saying (with the caution of a historian) there was evidence that pointed to Kansas and to Smith Center as the point of origin of the song.

The man who usually was given the credit for having written it, he continued, was a Dr. Brewster Higley, but little or nothing was known of him. Where he had come from was uncertain; what had happened to him was also uncertain. In fact, the more I poked the more confusing the whole thing was.

I started to find out what had "happened" to him and there, indeed, I had my troubles. Did you ever try to locate a missing man by mail? Well, you're taking on a job. I wanted to find where he was buried and if he had descendants; the latter, I thought, might be able to tell me something about him. The sparse accounts I could find said that after he had left Kansas he had gone to Oklahoma, or Texas, or to the Ozarks where, in one of these, he had died; but no one knew where his grave was. I wrote around, as best I could, but found no clue at all. Still *someone* must know. Then I did what I think is a bit of clever digging (ah!, these ex-reporters). After I had eliminated the other states, I wrote to Walter Harrison, of the *Daily Oklahoman*, at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, asking him to publish a letter. And, thank goodness, he did:

"I'm doing a book on the Corn Belt and in it I want to tell the origin of the song 'Home on the Range.' The thing has about driven me crazy. Dr. Brewster Higley, a pioneer doctor who homesteaded near Smith Center, Kansas, is supposed to have written it. It is possible he died in Oklahoma; no one seems to know when, or where his grave is. Do you know? Can you throw me a clue? If you can, I'll send you an autographed copy of the book when published."

I was astonished at the number of letters, about forty. Many of

the authors said their fathers had written the famous song, for he had sung it to them when they were children and had told them he had written it; and in this they were sincere and earnest; many sent ancient clippings and copies of diaries. However, a letter from Prague, Oklahoma, said: "The old doctor is buried in Fairview Cemetery, Shawnee, Oklahoma. I ought to know, my mother married his youngest son." I was immensely pleased; now I was getting somewhere. I would go to Shawnee. That old reporter instinct!

In the meantime, I had a letter from the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce in Smith Center, Kansas, saying that the cabin where the doctor had written the song was still standing. I wanted to see it; maybe it would be in the evening and the sun would be slanting across it. Anyway, it would be a lovely sight.

At last, I turned up in Smith Center, a town about *so* big; but there is one item of interest. A few miles away is a monument marking the center of the United States. "So," I thought, "the song was written in almost the exact geographical center of the United States." (Note about the monument: they have an autograph book in a rainproof box where you can write your name . . . if you are of that mind.)

I was told the song was written in 1873. The next year the *Smith County Pioneer* published it; this is the earliest documentary evidence. But when I asked to see the paper itself I found things were not quite that easy. That file had been stolen. It seems to have disappeared about the time the lawsuit was popping. But the poem was copied in a later anniversary number (in 1914) and this does exist and this I saw. This reprinting was before things began to boil; I accept it as authentic. In this version there are local references—"the banks of the Beaver" and to the Solomon Valley (the latter a very rich section of Kansas):

*Oh, give me the gale of the Solomon Vale,  
Where light streams with buoyancy flow;  
On the banks of the Beaver, where seldom, if ever,  
Any poisonous herbage doth grow.*

That last line is surely the worst bit of verse a well-intentioned poet ever left behind. No wonder the old gentleman pulled for Oklahoma. Thank goodness, the people who later tinkered with the song threw out the poisonous herbage.



(When he arrived the prairie land was called "the range." There were two kinds—the range and the "open" range, the latter meant that it had been fenced.)

In Smith Center itself there exists no memento, or souvenir, of any kind of the old doctor, although, after he had written the song, he worked on the *Smith County Pioneer*, for I was beginning to find he was a "writing doctor." (Once, as I have discovered, you get the writing virus into your bloodstream, you are pretty well done for. Ah me!)

Bits of information developed: he had come from La Porte, Indiana, and had entered up a claim. There, alone (which seemed strange) he had lived, fifteen miles from Smith Center. When a sick call came in, he hopped his horse, and, with his saddlebags about him, rode to the home of the illness. It was not unusual, I discovered, in the early days for a doctor to live on a claim and to make it his home and office.

Also I had found that buffalo had roamed this section shortly before Dr. Higley had arrived and that there were, when he was there, deer and antelope. The Beaver. Solomon Valley. Surely they were picturesque. And the cabin would be, too.

When I got there I found that a corn field comes up within three rods of the cabin. The cabin is owned by Lewis D. Hatch, of Loveland, Colorado, and is rented, as I write this, to Pete Rust. I asked Pete Rust how much corn he had and he said 160 acres. And he is "taking care" of all of it by himself, except for about three weeks during "laying by" season; then he expects to get a hand. So much for power machinery.

We talked; then Pete said, "All right, come on and I'll show you the cabin."

I asked him, as we walked, if many visitors came and he said, "About one a week."

"Do you like to have them?"

"Yes, I always get in a visit. When the strangers are gone I tell my wife what they said and we talk about it."

By now we arrived at the cabin. I nearly fell over. It is now a henhouse! It's filled with white hens with red combs, and smells to the tops of the trees. I don't believe I ever saw so many roost-poles in a henhouse.

It is a few yards from the banks of the Beaver. The creek is dry; surface soil has washed into it and has so filled it that there is no

water, except now and then in the spring when a freshet comes tearing down.

I hadn't yet got over my shock. "Couldn't you clean out the old cabin and keep it for sentimental reasons?"

Pete Rust shook his head. "We're short of hen space."

"Don't you ever pause and look at it and think what a historical event took place here?"

"Yes, I do sometimes," said Pete reflectively. "On the other hand, I've got used to the idea. An' there's always the hen-space problem. I have to think of that. Sometimes visitors leave gates open. I've got to think of that, too."

A. E. Daniels told me how exactly the song was written. He was a neighbor boy and I think he said he was a distant relative of the doc's; at least, he spent a great deal of his playtime on the Higley homestead. Late one afternoon, according to Mr. Daniels, Dr. Higley wanted a deer; he got his gun and came out and sat down on a stump near Beaver Creek. Now and then, at this time of day, deer would wander up and down, browsing. None came, however, so Dr. Higley took a sheet of foolscap out of his pocket and began to write down words that were bubbling in his mind. And there on the tree trunk, according to Mr. Daniels, the famous song was composed. This original does not exist, for later Dr. Higley had a "wagon fire" and the song and many of his personal possessions were burned. I asked what a "wagon fire" was and found it meant the catching on fire of the wagon that the people used to move from one part of the country to another.

And now came the very heart and soul of folksong making; the old doctor got his neighbor, a few miles away, to "try his hand" at setting the words to music. This neighbor ran a mill and his name was Dan Kelley, and the place where he had the mill was Gaylord, Kansas, a trading post. Dan Kelley was "musical" and, after a time, came forth with "something that seems more or less appropriate." It proved to be; it was the start of one of the great folksongs. As a matter of record, it was played and sung for the first time by an orchestra led by "Cal" Harlan; the time was 1873 and the exact town was Harlan (named for his father). The title that Dr. Higley had put on it was "Oh, Give Me a Home Where the Buffalo Roam." But later, he, himself, changed this to its present one.

The song caught on; every dance and play party in Solomon Valley echoed it. I interviewed some of the grandsons and grand-

daughters of the men and women who had stepped to it; and it was wonderful to talk to them. I will not stop to give the details, nor mention in full the country orchestras that played it; nor the towns and schools that sang it. One was, as I have noted, the Stanberry Normal.

The words were not written, nor the music. "Everybody" knew it. And this was almost exactly true. As they sang the words they changed them a bit to make them "suit." "Cal" Harlan died in 1938, aged eighty-nine. He said that he had played and sung it more than a thousand times.

Now comes an extraordinary matter in the making of a folksong. John A. Lomax was the best-known collector of folksongs in America; this was his hobby and his passion and wherever he went he was on the alert. One day, in 1908, in San Antonio, he went into a saloon out beyond the Southern Pacific tracks—looking, of course, for folksongs. Nice work, if you can get it. The proprietor was a Negro, but it appears he had imbibed some of his wares, for he was not in his saloon, as a proprietor should be, but asleep under a tree. Lomax succeeded in waking him, but all the Negro could say was "Tomorra." Lomax came back the next day, bringing with him a crude Edison dictating machine; oldsters following these lines will remember it. (Do you recall how you used to hook those stethoscope blobs into your ears? Come, now!) The Negro had recovered sufficiently to sing. Among his songs was one that Lomax had never heard; it was "Home on the Range." The Negro said he had "picked it up" in the cow camps where he had been, at that time, a cook; this was before he had moved on to the more satisfying job of saloon proprietor with its pleasant afternoons off. The song had drifted down from Kansas to Texas and the Panhandle.

The power of the words and the haunting melody moved Lomax profoundly; here was a true folksong. He took the dictating machine and the records to Henry Leberman, a blind teacher of music at the State School for the Blind, in Austin, Texas. Leberman fastened the plugs in his ears and played the song over and over, then began to set down the music. Exactly twenty-five years had passed since Dan Kelley, the musical miller, had composed the music.

In 1910 Lomax got out a book entitled *Cowboy Songs* and in this included the "Home." He used the music as Leberman had taken it down from the wheezy old cylinder machine; "this," in the words of Lomax, "made up the core of the tune that has become



popular." Thus two unexpected things had occurred which were helping to make the song permanent—the singing of the song by the Negro saloon-keeper and the setting down of the music by the blind music teacher.

Fifteen years passed without anything worth mentioning happening; then came an unexpected impetus. Oscar J. Fox of San Antonio put the song into sheet-music form. It sold a little, not too much.

Five years more, but still nothing startling. Then David Guion, of Dallas, made another arrangement and the stature of the song increased; more and more, people were beginning to sing about the joys of having a home where the buffalo roam and where the deer and the antelope have a delightful time. During the next six or eight years other publishers issued the song in slightly different musical dress, but, in the main, following the version laid down by Lomax in his book. By this time the local Kansas references had been dropped; the poisonous herbage had long since gone; also—

*Where glideth along, the graceful swan,  
Like a maid in her heavenly dream.*

How that swan ever got into Beaver Creek I don't know; the old doctor must have brought her from Indiana. But now, too, she was gone. And the gale in the Solomon Valley.

Suddenly, in 1933, the song was given a new impetus, a very powerful one, indeed. The depression was still upon this country; one morning, when news was slow and while correspondents were waiting to see President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the men began to sing the "Home." When the newsmen came in, he said the song was a favorite, and asked them to sing it again; this they did and he joined in. The story was put on the wires and immediately every radio station in the country pounced on it. John Charles Thomas and Lawrence Tibbett, especially, sang it. Music publishers seized upon this and brought out new editions.

Then, as suddenly as the radio stations had begun, they ceased; in fact, they ordered their performers *not* to sing it at all. It was not long before the reason was out—a suit had been launched against the radio stations and the music publishers for a half-million dollars which is a lot of buffalo feed. No other single ballad in the history of song literature has ever been valued at such a high price.

The reason for all this soon developed; Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Goodwin, of Tempe, Arizona, had declared in a filed suit that the song had been plagiarized from their "An Arizona Home" and that they had a copyright on it as of February 27, 1905. There was a great pothor; John Charles Thomas and Lawrence Tibbett dreaded the sight of a buffalo. A deer would have frightened them speechless.

A lawyer from New York was sent out to find what he could find, for, as yet, no one knew who had written the "Home." He traveled in seven states, interviewing dozens of people, finally arriving at Smith Center and in the home of "Cal" Harlan. "Cal" said that he was the first person in the world to sing it in public and that he and his wife had played it for years at dances and country sociables. "Cal's" wife was the sister-in-law of Dan Kelley.

"An' we can play 'em again, right now, can't we, Ma?"

Mrs. Harlan said more'n likely, whereupon the two got down their guitar and banjo, just as they had two generations before, and tore into it. The graceful swan was in their version, also the poisonous herbage.

The lawyer made a record and pictures, too. He then interviewed about a dozen other Smith County people who had played and sung it years ago; but, for some reason or other, he did not go to the cabin itself. The lawyer took all this back to New York and, when he confronted the other side with what he had found, the suit was dropped.

Meantime other claimants were springing up. One was from Colorado . . . the state where the up-and-coming congressman had it written into the *Congressional Record* that Colorado was *it*. Colorado asserted that the song had been composed there in 1885, in a cabin during the stormy winter, under the title "Colorado Home." Other states came along promptly. One claimant even showed up from the state of Washington, where, so far as I know, no buffalo ever roamed, nor ever a graceful swan glided along like a maid in a swoon.

So enthralled was I by this time that I kept wondering, what kind of man was Dr. Brewster Higley? Had he written anything else? What have his relatives to say? What about Fairview Cemetery? Was his grave really there?

It was with a tremendous sense of excitement that I knocked at the door of a little white stucco house at the address that had been

given me—1802 East 9th Street, Shawnee. What would happen in the next few moments?

Well, nothing did. I banged again. Finally I went around to the rear and, after some shouting and pounding, found a man in his undershirt, shaving. He was sandy-complexioned and seemed about fifty years old.

“Is your name Higley?”

“Yes.”

And now the very moment had come. “Are you a relative of Dr. Brewster Higley who is credited with having written ‘Home on the Range?’”

“I am his grandson.”

I cannot tell how pleased, how delighted, how thrilled I was. It was the culmination of a great deal of work and a great deal of failure, too.

“I’d like to talk to you,” I said and explained my mission.

Then he said, “I expect you’d also like to talk to my father. He is the son of Dr. Brewster Higley.”

I tell you there is an immense satisfaction in running down a “story” and having something you hadn’t hoped for drop into your lap. The son of the old doctor! Still living!

Before long we were in the sitting room and I was looking around me, absorbed in every detail. Harry Higley, the grandson, now spruced up in his Sunday-morning best, was across from me. I thought he was very nice, indeed.

I asked him what kind of work he did and he said he was a plasterer.

Old books, diaries, letters, and poems were brought and, little by little, the story of Dr. Brewster Higley came out. He was, surely, a “writing” doctor, for one poem to “Dryden, Eng. Poet” was nine pages long and was written in an old-fashioned, heavily-shaded-below-the-line hand. I found he had composed three songs: “Katy-did’s Secret,” “Army Blue,” “A Dream in Which I Saw My Mother.” The second, written at the close of the Civil War, had been sung for years at political rallies. And now a believe-it-or-not: he had not thought enough of “Home on the Range” to try to get it published. He did not esteem the song highly and, when others claimed it, made no special effort to cry them down. He always believed “Army Blue” was his finest song.

I began to see that his family life was more complicated than I



had at first supposed and, when I inquired into it, I was surprised to find the old doctor was, for those days, a gay bird. The biggest surprise of all was when I found he had come to Kansas and had homesteaded a claim miles from a railroad to escape a wife back in Indiana. And there, living all alone, he had sung the delights of a home . . . "where never is heard a discouraging word." He got around, for, in all, he had five wives.

He seems to have been an exceedingly competent doctor. One year he attended eighty-six cases of typhoid. Once (according to A. E. Daniels) he went for six weeks with only one meal of "vittles" at home. Often, with his handsaw, he had to cut off an arm or a leg; he was truly a prairie physician.

I found this to be the Odyssey of this Kansas doctor; he lived on his claim and Smith Center until 1886 when he pulled stakes for Arkansas. Six years later he came to Oklahoma and one year after this he arrived in Shawnee.

"You know," said Harry Higley, "he was Brewster Higley VII. My father is Brewster Higley VIII. I am Harry Brewster Higley IX and my son is Brewster Higley X." Never before in all my life had I seen such an array of continuing family names.

The great-grandson came in (the X) and I asked him what he was going to do when he was grown.

"Be an architect," he said firmly.

I turned to Harry Higley. "Did any of the other members of your family ever write songs?"

"No. Not one."

The conversation went here and there for a while, then he said, "Would you like to visit with my father?" The moment had come.

He disappeared into the kitchen and came back with the son of the old doctor. I felt a curious excitement, a little awe, and a great deal of respect. Was I really meeting the son of the man who had written one of the finest folksongs in America, one that always stirs me deeply? How many homes on the range I had seen; how well I knew them!

The old gentleman came forward slowly and when he reached the chair at the end of the table he put a brown, mottled hand on it and steadied himself. "You say it's a stranger, Harry?"

"Yes, father."

And well he might come slowly, for he was ninety-three. His face was mottled, too, and the sight of that brown hand, with its

thick hard glistening nails, touched me. How much hard work it must have done!

"Would he be wantin' to put some questions?"

"Yes, father. He's a writer and he wants to set them down."

The old gentleman cupped a hand behind his ear and leaned forward eagerly. "Would they be about my race horses?"

"No. He wants to ask you about your father."

"Oh," he said, obviously disappointed. "Well, what has he got in mind?"

And now I felt awkward. "Did your father ever talk about having written the song?"

"Oh, he was always writin' off poetry. We didn't think much of it. Sometimes he would try to read some of it to us, but we were always busy and didn't have much time for such things. He was a good parent to me; never laid his hand on me in his life. Harry, shall I tell him about 'Alice Coffman'?"

Then began a remarkable human experience—as the old gentleman told me about the race horses he had trained. His eyes (or it seemed to me) shone; certainly his voice vibrated.

"Alice Coffman was the best horse I ever trained; belonged to Harry Stuhl. She was known around Little Rock, Arkansas, as 'The Horse that Wouldn't Start.' But she would start for me!" He chuckled delightedly, this old man living in the past. "They called me 'Little Doc.' Hardly anybody around the track knew my real name. I was little then; I still am, as you can see. Well, I started in to train Alice Coffman and pretty soon I got her so she would start. It was by tryin' to understand her; it takes quite a bit of handlin' to understand a horse. She got to have confidence in me. Finally, when I spoke the word, she was off. I've trained a good many horses but I never had one I thought as much of as I did of Alice Coffman." He paused; he was living in the past so dear to him. "That gave 'Little Doc' a good reputation. There wasn't anybody in Arkansas who didn't know 'Little Doc.' They called me that because of my father being a doctor. Would you like to hear about the time she won and they telegraphed New York because they believed she was a ringer?"

"He wants to know about your father," said Harry Higley.

"Oh," said the old gentleman regretfully. "Well, there ain't much to be said. One of his poems—'Home on the Range'—became favorably known. He used to play the fiddle; we liked that. I sup-

pose you've heard of Jesse James. Well, his brother Frank James used to work with me in Arkansas. If Alice Coffman had been a ringer, I would have gone to the pen. But I never engaged in anything of a questionable nature. I tell you she was a good horse and you've got to believe me." His voice rang; and I did believe him.

Mrs. Higley, who had been stirring around in the kitchen, came in. "I've your dinner ready, father."

The old man got up stiffly. "I'm thankful I've still got my appetite. In lots of ways I've got lots of things to be thankful for. My son makes me a good home and Inez is good to me." He paused to look at me with his fading eyes. "Did I give you what you wanted about Alice Coffman?"

"You did, Mr. Higley," I said.

He edged slowly to the door; taking hold of the jamb, he turned around. "It took me about three weeks to learn her to start."

Dr. Higley came to Shawnee, I found, in 1893, just twenty years after he had written the song. Sometimes he spoke of the song; sometimes he didn't. He did not practice medicine, for he was seventy-one.

"Where did he die?" I asked.

"Bruce, get on your wheel and see exactly what that number is," said Mrs. Higley.

Bruce the Tenth darted away.

In a few minutes he was back. "Two hundred and thirty North Kimberly Avenue."

He loved to garden; he had a few friends his own age; now and then he played his "fiddle." He had a Greek Bible and sometimes sat on the porch with this in his lap. (This Bible is now in Tampa, Florida.) He was an ardent Mason; their meetings were one of his greatest pleasures.

In 1911 he died—the year after Lomax got out his book. So far as is known, Dr. Higley never knew his song was published in book form. He never made a penny from the song. Nor has any of his family. The music publishers have grown rich off it.

The old doctor was eighty-nine.

The *Shawnee Herald* came out with a two-paragraph item: "An Aged Physician Passes." And that was all. Later, when this paper learned from me that he was buried in Shawnee, it went to town with a banner headline announcing the old doctor was buried there. (It made no mention of me.)



I was eager to see the very tombstone of the prairie doctor and went to the cemetery with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Higley. There it was! My long quest was ended. I cannot tell you how touched I was as I stood there, looking down at the last resting place of a man who had given me so much pleasure.

The stone says: *Dr. Bruce Higley, 1822-1911*. I asked why this was and was told that in the family he was known as "Bruce" and that his daughter-in-law had set it upon the stone (Mrs. Viola Higley, widow of his youngest son Everett Higley). Beside him is his last wife.

There is a movement on foot to make "Home on the Range" the state song of Kansas. And this may be done even as I write. I hope so, for the song would then be coming back to the state that gave it birth. But there is one thing I wish were not to be. The industrious Chamber of Commerce, in Smith Center, has bought ground for a park in the town and plans to purchase the old cabin and truck it in and set it in the park—would draw tourists, they say. Also they argue the ancient cabin is so far from a main highway that few people would ever get to see it. That is true, but I would rather think of it being on the banks of the Beaver—even if the cabin is filled with chickens—than I would in a tourist-catching park.

I suppose the cabin and the grave will grow in interest. I'm sure the story of the old doctor will—the Indiana physician who came to the plains of Kansas to escape one wife, and there, in a humble cabin, wrote of the joys of a home on the prairies. I think of him riding the prairies with his saddlebags and his medicines and his handsaw; I think of the poems he must have made up as he rode along, this man who all his life loved poetry. I think of him sitting on a stump with his rifle in his lap, waiting for a deer—and giving the world something very dear, indeed. I think of him in his later years in Shawnee, unknown to the world, methodically keeping his diaries and notebooks and sitting in his rocking chair reading his Greek Bible. He is of the very heart of America.

## *The Wonderful Mirage*

by T. A. McNEAL

[T. A. McNeal was prominent in the affairs of Kansas for many years. The story here is from a series of sketches which first appeared in the *Topeka Capital*, a paper with which he was associated.]

THE FOLLOWING THRILLING STORY of adventure and hair-raising experience is related by Judge William R. Smith, of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe railroad. Judge Smith modestly insists that the story is not for publication, but I can not permit so interesting and verified a narrative to be lost to the reading world. I therefore violate his confidence and give you the story as he related it to me:

"The spring of '79 will always be memorable for the devastating cyclones which started in Texas and moved north through the Indian Territory into western Kansas. Not one alone terrified the early settlers who were making their homes on the frontier, but a succession of tornadoes moved over the country at that time, leaving destruction and death in their wake; a second and third glean- ing what was left of the scanty possessions of the already impoverished people.

"On May 29, of that year, a cyclone of unheard-of violence traveled over the Indian Territory on its way to Kansas. Dirty Mud, a chief of the Snake Indians, had four of his wives swept from his side while they were engaged in the domestic duty of preparing the intestines of a dog for their husband's dinner. Dirty Mud was, however, somewhat consoled after this sad bereavement by the fact that he had three wives left, who, fortunately, were chopping wood two miles distant from the path of the storm. This consolation, however, was brief, for with an inhuman mania for destruction, this same cyclone, after moving forty miles north, hesitated on its deadly journey, and returning the next day, carried the three remaining wives of Dirty Mud off the face of the earth, and they were seen no more. Waiting for two days to be assured that none of his wives would descend, Dirty Mud married again, but not until he had dug a cyclone cellar fourteen feet deep under his cabin, into which, at the first appearance of a dark cloud, he let down his second batch of wives to a place of safety, with a rope.

"What I have related so far is not recorded from personal observation. I come now, however, to an experience in which I played

a thrilling and dangerous part. It relates to the same cyclone which so greatly disrupted the domestic relations of the Snake Indian chief and brought profound sorrow into a family happily united. I was making a business journey on horse-back from Sheridan Lake to Water Valley, two towns situated about five miles over the Kansas line in Colorado. In the southwest were gathering clouds, accompanied by gusts of wind which greatly agitated the sagebrush and cactus, filling the air with red dust. As the wind grew stronger, a cloud blacker than ink approached the earth, and to my great terror assumed a funnel-shaped form, leaving no doubt that a deadly cyclone was close at hand. My horse, now spurred to a gallop, his ears laid back, and trembling like a leaf, swept past hundreds of jack rabbits, which were running at full speed in their efforts to escape. Giving a backward glance, I saw the funnel-shaped monster whirling in its course, tearing up all vegetation in its path and digging a trench two feet deep in the dry sand. It had a rotary motion, which in the brief time I had to calculate, I estimated at 300,000 revolutions a minute. On its closer approach, my horse became violently excited. Leaping over a boulder, he looked back, increased his speed, and snorting with fright, threw spray from both his nostrils to a distance of ten feet. There was no escape. The horrible monster would swallow us in an instant more. I held my breath. At that moment the whirling cyclone sent a stone against the horse's ribs, at which he reared on his hind legs, made a violent plunge sidewise and threw me, stunned and bleeding to the ground. This saved my life and that of the horse.

"I was thrown twenty feet from the path of the cyclone and escaped with no serious injuries. The horse did not fare so well. The edge of the whirling cloud, propelled with irresistible force, and revolving like a buzz-saw, struck the animal a glancing blow and passed on with terrific velocity to the north. On arising to my feet I approached the horse, which stood perfectly still in a dazed condition, paralyzed with fright. On examination I found that every hair on his body had been pulled out by the roots, until his skin had the appearance of a Mexican dog. Science has not yet accounted for the eccentric freaks of a cyclone after it gets a fair start. The horse then began to shake like a man with the ague, swaying from side to side. Cold sweat streamed from his body, and so violent were the vibrations of his head that every tooth in his mouth rattled to the ground, some of them flying off to a distance



of twenty feet. He did not long survive this attack. Surrounded with succulent grass reaching to his knees, the poor animal starved to death in less than a week. After his death it was discovered that by some unknown chemical action the horse's hide had been completely tanned and was soft and pliable enough for the manufacture of the finest shoes.

"Looking in the distance to note the movements of the cyclone, I was astonished to see several houses and a church on the border of a lake, on the banks of which were many trees, some of them ten feet in diameter and a hundred feet high. Knowing the arid condition of the country, I saw at once that the unusual manifestation was a mirage. At the same instant the cyclone attacked the town, the lake, and the trees with tremendous force. It started with lightning speed and moved swifter than a rush telegram over a down-hill wire. It looked more vicious than when it passed me and struck the horse. Quicker than I can tell it, the funnel-shaped cloud of ferocious blackness struck the edge of the lake. Trees of the size described appeared to be twisted out by the roots, with the facility with which a dentist pulls a tooth. Their huge trunks disappeared, ground to a pulp in an instant. After the trees were disposed of, with one gulp the cyclone swallowed all the water in the lake, leaving its bed dry and sandy as a brick yard. Its tentacles were next thrown around the church steeple, carrying it away without disturbing the rest of the building. When the devastation was complete, it stopped in its course as if hesitating before seeking new food for its voracious maw. This pause in its progress led me to think that the unsubstantial impediment to the devastating work of the cyclone, which the mirage had interposed, had been disappointing, inasmuch as no physical force could dissipate or destroy this optical illusion. I was forced to smile at the futile attack of the vicious cyclone on the imaginary village, with its lake and trees, which disappeared like a vision when the black monster whirled over the place where it seemed to have a site and fixed location. No sooner had the cyclone moved on, however, than the houses reappeared, the trees resumed their former places and the lake was as calm and peaceful as before.

"I have never heard of another instance where a mirage was seen to come into collision with a cyclone. Inasmuch as there were no witnesses who can attest the truth of what I saw, I have been

careful to avoid exaggeration, as should be done in all cases where personal experiences of a startling nature are detailed, in the absence of others who may vouch for their accuracy."

# X.

## Turn of the Century

*As a result of the political unrest following the collapse of the boom in 1887, the Populist party was organized in 1890 at Topeka by delegates representing farmer and labor organizations. In fusion with the Democrats, it won the governorship in 1892 and 1896. The party urged such measures as relief for the debtor class, regulation of freight and passenger rates, direct election of United States Senators, and greater legislative power by the people rather than their delegated agents. In short, the Populists in Kansas were a part of the movement which culminated in the progressive measures enacted on a national scale under the first Roosevelt and Wilson. The last dozen years of the old century were a period of political turmoil; the first dozen of the new, a period of progressive legislation—under the aegis, mainly, of the Republican party. The Populist party is most interesting today in terms of the personalities who dramatized issues. The most notorious reformer of those years, however, was Carry Nation, the hatchet woman from Kansas who operated outside the pale of political parties. Yet all was not sound and fury. William Allen White was reading proof on "The Home Coming of Colonel Hucks" at the same time he was writing "What's the Matter with Kansas?"*

### *Kansas at the World's Fair*

by CARLETON BEALS

[Carleton Beals, a grandson of Carry Nation, was born in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, but went to California with his parents when three years old. He is the author of nearly a score of books, and is considered a leading interpreter of Latin America to the United States.]

"THE SPIRIT OF KANSAS" was a large canvas that hung in the state building at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. It was painted by Mrs. Mary E. Weston, then seventy-six years of age, and depicted "a lovely young girl," holding the dove of peace on an uplifted finger and mounted on a horse going full speed. "The delicate coloring of her flowing drapery and golden hair blended beautifully, and the large expressive eyes gave a spirit of animation to the whole," said the official description.



Probably few Kansans who visited the building found anything incongruous in this appalling sentimentalism and worse art from the hinterland of a state bearing the national epithet of "Bloody Kansas," where grim battles were being fought over the location of county seats, a state in which just a few months previous the capitol had been converted into the bivouac of armed gangs and a treasonable militia. Armed violence between two rival legislatures, Republican and Populist, each claiming to represent the commonwealth, had been averted by a hair's breadth.

The same flamboyant sentimentality featured the dedicatory address of Honorable Albert H. Horton, Chief Justice of the Kansas Supreme Court, who was called by the Populists "a Santa Fe railroad hireling." The charge was hotly denied, but presently, after ruling "against the people," he resigned to accept a lucrative post as railway attorney. But no one could doubt his love for Kansas. His speech at the World's Fair proved this. It fairly dripped with exalted phraseology. In verse, he declared that "if all the states were stars and woven in a crown . . . Kansas, from the very topmost height," would "eclipse them all."

Rapturously he declaimed:

"Every field a smiling promise,  
Every home an Eden fair,  
And the angels—Peace and Plenty—  
Strewing blessings everywhere.

"Kansas is here because she has not been disobedient to the heavenly vision; . . . she pursues her way to the stars, a long journey, but to an ever-shining and ever-lasting goal."

One need not be too censorious because the stuffed shirt rhetoric, the cloying sentiment, the gooey phrase now strikes us as absurd and pathetic. Each age has its false sentiment, and politicians of today—though few of us are able to detect the hyperbole and the falsity, precisely because it is contemporary—find they can spread their wings at dedicatory ceremonies. Hollow phrase and glittering generalities about love, labor, bravery, liberty, democracy and justice are wholly effective.

The fine phrases of the 'nineties could scarcely conceal the serious plight of the farmers. Kansas and the whole country were embarking upon one of the nation's worst depressions. Kansas had been hit by drouth; the "octopus" railroads were in their worst era of high and fluctuating rates, of monopolistic privilege, of wild

speculation; farmers, farms, towns, cities, states were being swallowed up by the debts they had created to fling wealth into and power into the hands of clever promoters; the frontier was closed, now, and the jolt was to send a shock back across the Alleghenies to the eastern financiers, to the far corners of the earth, and a fire of rebellion was to take hold of men everywhere. Instead of the angels, Peace and Plenty, strewing blessings, for many in Kansas Disorder and near Hunger were the portion.

Down in the main hall of the Kansas building, amid a mosaic of corn, wheat, millet, flax, alfalfa, were figures of production. The previous year, Kansas had grown 138,658,021 bushels of wheat but what the exposition did not state was that those bushels of wheat were worth so little that farmers were burning them in the fields, and burning corn for fuel. A Sedgwick judge in 1890 ruled that corn could not be taken for debts because it was fuel, which was exempt from all foreclosure proceedings. A Republican Congressman upbraided Jerry Simpson for this barbarism of the Kansas farmers in destroying their crops. "Sockless" Jerry had retorted, "Yes, and by the light of that burning, they read the history of the Republican Party." The brave depictees of Kansas progress did not say that Kansas had grown far more wheat back in 1885 and that it was worth more per bushel. They did not point out that in 1890 Kansas had been able to produce only 55 million bushels of wheat. Nothing to suggest that everywhere farms were going under the hammer, that gaunt starving men had swept in a prairie fire of protest into the new Populist party and were busy ousting old politicians, striking out half intelligently, half blindly at the things that caused them suffering.

But an exposition is expected to put its best foot forward, not to portray the truth, or at least not the whole truth. Even the few rough-hewn Kansas farmers who could afford to buy an excursion ticket were thrilled that the Kansas exhibit in many ways outshone those of all other states. They enjoyed the beautiful fictions and did not consider it improper, all this sentimental ostentation. They did not expect Kansas to expose its troubles to the world on such an occasion, and they were impressed by the marvelous strides of beauty and science they saw on every hand.

They nodded approval to the words of Lieutenant Governor Felt, who, in another dedicatory speech, said that Kansas was a state "that dedicates a church every Sunday, and a school house

every week day," and it was almost true. The Kansans believed in education strongly; they were new at the game of culture, but few states could show such rapid progress, and probably no state in the whole exposition devoted so much attention and space to educational matters—1,560 square feet in all. The Kansas exhibit of natural history was outstanding, and the exhibits of stuffed animals or replicas, were placed in settings realistically produced, in a manner not to be attempted by the New York museums for decades later.

Nor did the Kansans see any incongruity that the scientific exhibit included the stuffed horse Comanche, the only surviving steed of the Custer massacre at Little Big Horn, in 1876. The animal had died at Fort Riley only the previous year. The placard on brave Comanche—and it was solemnly reproduced in the official Kansas report of the exposition—stated that though his master, Colonel Keogh, had perished, Comanche had escaped, suffering seven wounds. "The severe wounds were, one through the neck, one just behind the front shoulder, passing clear through, and one in the hind quarters passing out between the hind legs. . . . Thousands of people came to the Kansas building for the special purpose of seeing what is still in existence of this memorable and historic horse."

One woman wept as she read the general orders of the seventh cavalry that Comanche, as long as he lived, was to be paraded in all regimentals "saddled and bridled, draped in mourning."

The period saw no harm in mixing the scientific with the purely sentimental and historic; one comes closer to appreciating that similar strange juxtaposition of vast scientific erudition and the most childish emotions, simple mythology and gross superstition that clutter the pages of the weird books of Ignatius Donnelly, one of the great leaders of Populism. Or Tom Watson, mixing French history with political declamations, and finally descending into the wallow of Negro and Jew baiting, or Hamlin Garland, turning to so-called psychic research, that frequent refuge of the twilight years when the egg-shell dreams have been smashed by life's realities.

The Kansans too were certainly fanatically religious and righteous—a serious folk indeed. The circuit riders found, as in so much of the frontier, a ready market for their hysterical wares, although in that broad commonwealth they could rarely kneel to pray in outdoor meetings, for cockle-burs in the knees were very painful.



The Kansans saw no conflict between their periodic revivalism and the enlightenment they so zealously sought.

Their righteousness took the form of ardent temperance and suffrage for women. Carrie [Carry] Nation, who raised her tomahawk against the saloons, was a part of the popular uprising that was stirring on the plains. Mary E. Lease, "the crusader of the plains," told her dusty sun-bonnet audiences that annually in New York 100,000 shop girls were forced to sell their virtue because of the pitiful wages they received. She probably grossly exaggerated the supply of New York virgins and also the market for them, but her toil-worn audiences, who saw sin only in urban terms, believed and wept.

Perhaps far more imbued with the spirit of Kansas than Mrs. Weston's picture of the fair nymph flying on horseback, was the painting, included in the art exhibit, of "The Prohibition Sunflower," on whose huge yellow petals were engraved statistics of what prohibition had done for the state along with the golden words of leading politicians about the matter—such as those of Senator P. B. Plumb. The official report remarks with pride that "Prohibitionists from all over the United States . . . made extracts from it."

Beside it hung a much-commented-on portrait of Frances E. Willard, executed by W. A. Ford of Hutchinson, in the corners of which were depicted a convict, an imbecile, a lunatic and an Indian—"the political peers of the grand central figure."

The Chicago Fair as a whole was a grandiose monstrosity. It could hardly have been otherwise. It belonged to the age of ostentation, where great wealth had outdistanced both culture and social values. It came at the culmination of an age when the great robber barons had tossed up their roccoco palaces on Nob Hill in San Francisco, along Central Park East in New York and along the Chicago lake front. Those monstrosities of architecture were mostly combinations of imitations of classic architecture and local ingenuities and were filled with the discordant plunder of the five continents. The World's Fair at least had the virtue of simulating the solid classic marble of antiquity.

The Court of Honor, except for the American flag at the head of the lake, looked more like a misplaced Greco-Roman civic center than anything produced in America. The White City, remarks Louis Hacker, had "as little to do with the late nineteenth century

America as the temples to Venus and Janus which the . . . architects so coolly copied." The Fair did not even demonstrate the restrained and intelligent adaptations typical of such forerunners of real American architecture as H. H. Richardson and Louis H. Sullivan. The Fair buildings caught none of the swift majesty of a structure such as the Brooklyn Bridge, which cast aside servile imitation to create an aesthetic in keeping with its functional purpose and the new scientific strides of America. Instead the World's Fair squeezed out the juice of native achievement and cast it aside. For two decades the Fair caused a rash of public buildings of ancient imperial design, better described as mausoleums of the past, to spread over the width and breadth of America to uglify American cities already ugly.

The Kansas building, the third largest state building on the grounds, was impressive: the lower floor was Moorish, the upper floor Grecian. People enter past two gigantic pyramids of coal from the state mines at Lansing, and a mammoth piece of rock salt from Lyons, weighing 5,000 pounds. "On every side utility was joined with beauty," remarks the official report optimistically. Actually it was mere side show juxtaposition.

The hybrid efforts are indicated by the following confused description. "Several tones of red, grading down from a rich dark velvety red to a tint of rose color, formed the background for the decorations within the main hall. Those shades blended exquisitely with the kernels, husks and cobs of corn, as well as with the grains, seeds, stalks and grasses utilized in the designs. As in Egyptian art, the waves of the Nile in the form of curves and scrolls, and the bud, leaf and blossom of the lotus in highly conventionalized forms, may be traced, so in the Kansas building the sunflower seemed to be the motive of the design. The coloring in the background was similar, if not identical, to that made use of by the people who dwelt in the rich valley of the Nile."

But the scroll work was "perhaps the most elaborate feature" in the decoration of the main hall, and "spiral curves of wheat seed and corn furnished some of the finest specimens of Moorish art."

Everywhere, the report declares, *Corn* was "the keynote, the dominant chord in the chromatic scale of color used in the decoration of the Kansas building. With what marvelous effect it was combined and interwoven can be but faintly portrayed by words." Corn, of course, was just then the curse of Kansas, as it has been so often

since those days. The soil of Kansas and the knowledge of agriculture and technical advance did their part—although wind and soil erosion have been allowed to destroy a vast empire in the state—but neither then nor since has Kansas been able to work out a wholly decent land system that would give full security and prosperity to its tillers of the soil.

It was inevitable that the earlier Kansans, in their land-bound state, should make ships out of corn and wheat kernels. Many of them had been New Englanders, and the memory of the sea was strong in them. Jerry Simpson, Populist leader, had been a Great Lakes captain. The official report describes one such effort: "A ship with sails composed of oats and the hull of redtop and other wild grasses, made a pretty marine scene. . . . Corn in zigzag style, represented the frame of light wood. Yachts, anchors and other marine scenes were frequent." There was certainly justification, since this was the centennial of the discovery of America, for the flag ship of Columbus, the "Santa Marie" (name misspelled), its hull formed of cane seeds, its anchor of redtop and its compass the sunflower. Had the doughty mariner been alive to see it, it would undoubtedly have excited one of his famous epistles to the Crown. On the upper floor the effect was "that of bas-relief figures seen on the specimens of Egyptian and Assyrian friezes." And of course, the Chinese pagoda, inevitable in all such exhibits! It stood at the very entrance of the exhibit on the main floor, twenty feet high. Within it stood a bunch of giant cornstalks "16 feet in height, grown in 1893 by James A. Coulter of Cowley County," which just touched the center bell, "lending a touch of beauty and color to the novel creation." To the right of the pagoda stood an Egyptian pyramid made of Kansas corn, and pyramids were scattered about liberally as though the state was already reduced to the desert that parts of it were later to become.

North Africa and the Moors, Greece, Rome, Egypt and the Nile, Assyria, China—the art and motifs of all were lavishly utilized along with the sailing boats of another era—it was the somewhat admirable and pathetic efforts of a people without artistic precedents or roots, unable as yet to weave the gifts of other peoples into the fabric of their own lives. Laudable aspiration was reduced to servile imitation. What was native and good in the exhibit was lost in a jumble of incongruity. Such was the Hutchinson fountain, composed of an ear of half-stripped corn carved from magnesian lime-



stone, "monumental of the enterprise of the noble ladies of Hutchinson," not an unpleasing work. Somewhat less successful was the fountain inside where folk drank from the lip of prairie dogs and rabbits. As the official report put it, "Eight little prairie dogs sat on their haunches ready to act as a reception committee, assisted by long-eared jackrabbits." A sign read, "Come and Drink with the boys and girls of Kansas." This notable idea was originated by Mrs. Kate Smead Cross and the ladies of Emporia.

Quite in keeping was the prairie schooner "Bound for Kansas . . . Lighthouse of the World." Its canvas top was made of grains, the wheels of cane seeds and reddish native grasses. The horses were also formed of seeds and grains "as delicately shaded as if done by an artist's brush." It was hardly to be expected that it should bear the humorous legends of those schooners that were already streaming back across the Mississippi, taking fugitive people home "To mother-in-law," "In God we Trust; in Kansas we bust," as later, jalopies were to bear similar folk Westward, from drouth and disaster to modern serfdom on the great scientific plantations of California.

Gold drapery set off the exhibit of Blue Rapids gypsum and a peacock-blue panel of plush bearing the legend "Best Water Power in 400 miles." The Blue Rapids Plaster Company displayed a fine bust of Columbus labelled "H. O. Fowler, Secretary."

The railroads, against which the Populists were then tilting their lances, provided the most extensive and impressive exhibits. But many local industries had not yet bowed to the mighty trusts that were then arising. There was still a chance for local flour millers. The Fulton Milling Company displayed four brands, done up in pink satin sacks: Imperial, White Rose, Snowball and Angel Food. A paper company exhibited large rolls of brown paper, labelled "Anti-Trust brand." We are somewhat regretful, in view of later international affairs, that the silk exhibit was not a forerunner of the great hopes expressed. "There is no reason why silk and its manufacture should not in the near future be one of the leading industries of the state." More hopeful than practical perhaps, was the exhibit of George A. Talbot, who displayed pens made of slough grass—"excellent substitutes for goose quills." They were used for registering the visitors and were "anxiously picked up as souvenirs."

The same curious medley of themes ran through the art exhibit.

Mrs. J. H. Tinner of Concordia had painted six children, with schoolbooks and flowers, "real Kansas children, not posing in fine linens and laces, but natural jolly children, with a general air of health and contentment." Alongside this, and a still life depicting the "Products of Kansas, cucumbers, corn, onions, resting against a cabbage head, with a kettle of potatoes and a box of luscious blackberries in the foreground," was hung a canvas of calla lilies from Japan. Mixed in with paintings of "two musically inclined owls" Jakey and Marie, in a basket, "not the hooting, melancholy owl that complains from some ivy-mantled tower," of quail, of Sol Smith, the well-known aged sawyer, with "rugged face and brawny hands," an Indian lookout, suggesting to the frontiersman, "days of danger and nights of watching." Enclosed in a straw frame, was "a dainty bit of coloring" of a wine glass and fruit by Mrs. Annie M. Newton of Garnett—queer motif amidst the predominating temperance propaganda. "A glimpse of Sedan" by Emma Gates; crayon portraits of "Bambetta" (*sic*), Voltaire and a "fine equestrian piece" in classic style. Miss Kittie Squires, apparently troubled by reading romantic Scott, had painted a stag pursued by hounds. Many were the paintings of the luscious fruits of the field and orchard, but "Sunny Kansas" with its cows, if "a charming rural scene," smelled more of Italy than the local habitat. Biblical inspiration cropped out in Orpha Appleman's painting of Moses and the Law.

One need not ridicule these numerous sincere efforts. If anything, the Kansas exhibit honored the local poets—their portraits hung in bold positions—the aspiring local artists, the sincere efforts toward education, more than did the state exhibits of many a later more commercialized fair. If many things bordered on the naïve, the absurd, the gauche, the unfinished, if it all shouted aloud the lack of home-grown tradition, if it was but doubly provincial in its efforts to imitate the grandeurs of other climes, nevertheless it breathed an aspiration for democratic self-expression, a sort of virile self-confidence that is lacking in many a more stream-lined creation of later years. It was the golden age of American democracy, for, despite the prevailing injustices and corruption of government and business, never before or since have the people of Kansas been so self-expressive. They founded their own newspapers, they wrote their own pamphlets and books, made their own speeches, painted their own pictures, wrote their own poems, and founded their own dem-

ocratic groups free of privilege and bossism. Today they read canned syndicated news material, they listen beside radios to what others say, they buy canned music, they get their culture via mass-production from distant centers.

In the greater perfection of our own century, the roots of many things truly American have struck deeper, and yet one feels that many of the hopeful if innocent and often ridiculous beginnings discernible in the Kansas exhibit of 1893 have been smothered—lost—just as the great political crusade of that era was to be smothered in the rise of industrialism, regimentation and imperialism and militarism that has featured much of the twentieth century of American life. The voice of the people has been increasingly silenced in the growth of vast mechanisms in politics, in industry, in all walks of life. Many of the promises of the simple democracy of earlier Kansas days have not held. History has yet to tell us whether that which has been lost has been compensated for by other virtues.

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## *The Rise and Fall of Barber*

by RALPH TENNAL

[Ralph Tennial, for many years the editor and publisher of the *Sabetha Herald*, served his apprenticeship under Ed Howe on the *Atchison Globe*. He had no formal education beyond the third grade; and during his apprenticeship would suspend a dictionary or an encyclopedia from the ceiling down over the feedboard of the press so that he could learn while he was working. From the pressroom, he became a police reporter, leaving the *Globe* to buy the paper in Sabetha, where he spent the most of his active years.]

IT WAS AT THAT PERIOD in the evolution of Kansas when she, bleeding again; when the Populist party was going to remove all objections to the railroads by turning them over to the government; when capital was about to be laid low by farmers' co-operative enterprises; when money by unlimited coinage was soon to become as plentiful as dogweed; when crop failures were a grim, present reality, that Barber sailed his prairie schooner into Grass City.

He stopped at the town pump. It was not his intention to halt in Grass City longer than the few minutes necessary to water his horses, but through the melting frost in the grocery store window



he saw a circle of loafers around the stove, and, being unable to resist the sight, he walked in.

"Shut the door!" said the grocer gruffly.

It was obvious that he did not look upon the stranger as carrying with him the promise of cash trade, and no wonder. His overcoat was patched, his undercoat patched; his vest was patched; his overalls were patched; his homemade mittens were patched. There were patches on the wind-frayed canvas that covered his wagon, and the harness was patched with odds and ends of ropes, straps and chains. If the newcomer had money, evidently he did not buy anything with it—which was the point in which the grocer was interested.

The patches on the mover's clothing were a study in themselves. They not only failed to match the garments to which they were sewed, but also did not match one another, and they seemed to be representing everywhere a spirit of inharmony. One patch was turning up its nose and scowling wickedly; near it was a half-mustache that curved downward in solemn pessimism; another looked wildly indignant with the aid of two spots of mud; a finger print gave another the facial contortion of an old Englishman who had loaned money on western Kansas land, and, the suggestion generally on the raiment of this curious visitor was one of displeasure and protest, as indeed, it was in the face of the man himself.

A stranger in Grass City being a rare sight, all conversation ceased when Barber entered. He stood a few moments in his idle ease. The silence invited an opening.

"Say," said Barber, pulling out his pipe and filling it in anticipation of a long exchange of gossip, "is this town wet or dry?"

"Wet town," said Jones, the plasterer; "and if it's a fair question," he added, "where do you hail from?"

"Rawlins County—Rawlins County sufferer," answered the stranger mechanically; "ain't no crops in that county agin. Ain't bin no rain for four months, only when the cyclone come, an' hit ruint ev'rything that wuzn't already ruint. Got so relief associations won't support us in no kind of style no more, an' las' week when I see how things wuz a goin' I ups an' says to the ole woman, 'Mam, says I, le's go to Arkinsaw an' see the folks.' An' she says, 'Pap, I'll have the things packed a-fore you can git the bows on the wagon.' So here we air, leavin' Kansas agin."

The stranger shoved his hands into his tight overalls pockets,

and, as he stood there half bent and shivering, as was his habit, he seemed to be representing the god of Hard Times in western Kansas.

He was ready to discuss any subject. Had he been following politics in Rawlins County? Why, certainly. The Populist party was going to sweep Kansas, then the United States, and finally, the world. In Rawlins County Populist meetings had been held and resolutions adopted every week, and there was a Populist paper in every town. Yes, there were a few Republican papers in that locality, but the Populist papers had roasted them to a rich brown, and had given them such a trimming down as they had never before experienced. Oh, of course, the Republican editors had fought back, and had shamefully abused the Populist editors. As a result of this outrage there had been some disturbance of the peace, and in one instance the accidental shooting of a bystander. No, the sufferer had not given much attention to his crops, as they always failed anyway. It was necessary to study the money question, and attend meetings, and hear speakers present the issues of the day. It looked as if the want of liberality on the part of the relief associations was another move of the plutocrats to grind the heel of oppression on the neck of the common people.

The speaker was stopped here by the appearance at the door of a shredded Prince Albert coat, with a boy inside of it—one of Barber's children. The coat told its own history: a parson's and a relic of a relief shipment. The boy kicked some snow off of his shoes after he got inside the door and said:

"Mam says hurry up an' don't be all day with that argyment."

Out in front of the door the mover's wife was holding the lines, and looking as if she would like to add an hour's emphasis to what the boy had said. Children were peering out from both ends of the wagon, to say nothing of children that might be out of sight, and there was a sprinkling of dogs and decrepit horses, generally around the unsightly-looking outfit. The traveler turned his back to the stove, and gazed indifferently toward where his wife was shivering in the cold. As he leisurely toasted himself before the fire, he remarked:

"Business seems to be mighty dull in this town." He had been a mover at intervals for fifteen years, and when he arrived in a place and wanted to be agreeable, he usually made this remark.

"That's the ailment," said Finch, the horse doctor, who talked in quick nervous jerks, and gestured as if he were going to put his

hand on the one addressed and say: "Whoa." "You're right; you're right. It's so," he continued; "every word of it's facts. It's dull here. No use denying it. No enterprise here. Town's run by old fogies. Never spend any money. Don't give the poor man a chance. Rather let a horse die than pay to have it treated. It's so. Town's no good. True as gospel. Ought to be a man-you-factoring center. No one'll build the mills. Dead as a door nail. Won't lie fer any town. It's so, every word of it." The horse doctor waved his hand, as if to say that was absolutely final; he had said it and no one could think otherwise. Finishing, he bit off a fresh chew of tobacco, and put the plug back in his pocket so quickly that no one had time to ask him for a chew. Demonstrations of approval followed his argument.

"Well," said the stranger, accepting the statement as being very important, "things seem mighty lively over at Solomon Valley."

Solomon Valley was in an adjoining county, and the speaker knew this statement would meet with endorsement, although the fact about Solomon Valley is that it is a school town, and nothing has been going on there since the Civil War. Comparisons of the two towns followed, in which the enterprise of Solomon Valley, and the wonderful business activity there, were held up as examples for Grass City citizens. Barber bought some tobacco and a sack of corn meal, when it seemed impossible to introduce a new topic for discussion, and prepared to depart.

"Enny ice cuttin' here?" he asked by way of filling in the time with talk.

"Yes," said the grocer, "Mart Bowman is cuttin' ice on Dailey's pond and wants lots of help."

Mart Bowman, the ice dealer, happened in at this moment, looking for men and teams to assist with the ice harvest. The Rawlins County sufferer had, in a moment of thoughtlessness, inquired for work, and there was nothing left for him to do but accept the invitation to take a job hauling ice.

When Barber discovered that he had ten dollars coming to him, he quit and began spending his time talking politics in Lane's shoe shop—the town loafing place.

Barber showed well-developed ideas concerning vicious legislation, the money power, trusts, political corruption and kindred subjects, and he was often quite eloquent in his denunciation of public evils. He had the wrongs of the people elaborately figured and grouped, and if any man dared to contradict him he stood



ready to direct him to the book and the page where the facts were given. He was able to prove by figures that the country was going to perdition, owing to man's vile thirst for money. The grafting of conscienceless politicians and other unprincipled men was terrible to behold. He wanted to see new laws passed for the protection of the public and old ones enforced. He longed for the day when honest men would be given a chance.

But just as Barber fastened his personality on Lane's shoe shop, and was granted the honor of a fixed seat near the soaking tub, his righteous indignation cooled, and the frequency of his visits diminished as rapidly as was possible without arousing suspicion. He deserted his covered wagon and moved into a commodious house. His family began dressing well. He wore boiled shirts, and said nothing about vicious legislation, the money power, the trusts, or the oppression of the common people. He was strangely prosperous. The country was a glorious success, so far as he was interested, and everything was all right and running smoothly. His oratory had vanished. He failed to see an alarming cloud on the horizon, and public sentiment need not wake up and shake off its lethargy, for any comfort or satisfaction it could administer to his principles. If he had an opinion, it was that when public sentiment was asleep it was not making itself ridiculous, and he hoped it never would wake up. And, as for the enforcement of the laws, that was the last thing he would care to have brought about. But he said nothing, avoided Lane's shoe shop, and went on wearing boiled shirts. His clothes were tailor-made; his mustache waxed and his shoes were shined every morning at the barber shop.

Mrs. Barber developed social ambitions, and had fantastic calling cards printed, on which it seemed that Barber's name was Alfonso Nottingham von Barber. The Barber house was crowded with up-to-date colonial furniture, striped, golden oak finish. There was a complete transformation in Barber and his family.

Rapid though the evolution was, it did not attract much attention because of the fact that there was a town fight in progress between the old battle-scarred gladiators—the Wets and the Drys. The Wets, or the faction which stood for open saloons, were in power, and the Drys, which were anti-saloon, were determined to overthrow the enemy. It did not make any difference, so far as the amount of liquor consumed in Grass City was concerned, whether

she was wet or dry, but it was the principle of the thing and the offices that the fight was for.

The *Bazoo*, which championed the cause of the Wets, employed all its energy, and used most of its space, in directing abuse at the *Clarion*, which was the organ of the Drys; and the *Clarion* devoted pages every week to lampooning the *Bazoo*. The purpose for which these papers were printed—that of publishing the news—was forgotten by the editors in their vicious attacks on each other. Most of the people in Grass City were engaged in the factional quarrel, and the town hall was open nearly every night to give a speaker an opportunity to excoriate the opposition. It was another hot campaign, and old scandals were rehashed, and new ones revealed or invented. Nothing was too sacred to be dragged into the political broil, and this question of whether the town was to be wet or dry paralyzed the community for four months.

Finally, in the spring, the election came; and when the smoke of the battle had cleared away, it was found that the Drys had won by four votes, whereas at the previous election the Wets had won by three votes. The Wets were in the black gloom of a crushing defeat, for they had boasted of five majority; the Drys were hilarious over the landslide.

In the next issue of the *Clarion*, which had become very important since the victory of its faction, there was an editorial announcement in bold, glaring type, which said the Anti-Saloon and Purity League had discovered that the low gambling inventions known as slot machines had long been operated shamelessly in every saloon in Grass City, and that the first act of the Anti-Saloon and Purity League would be to cause the arrest of the local agent of the nefarious devices, and his incarceration in jail.

As the sun, that great ball of ethereal carmine, bathing the clouds, and the air, and the earth in its mystic fire, swung out of sight in serene leisure toward the west, a squeaking, rotted, warped, and wobbling mover's wagon disappeared in violent haste toward the east. Colonial furniture and crayon portraits had been thrown into the wagon in wild confusion, and members of the family hung on in various perilous positions. Occasionally a few visiting cards, bearing the name of Mrs. Alfonse Nottingham von Barber, sifted out from some remote recess of the scrambled heap in the wagon and fell in the road. The driver, lashing his horses and looking back

apprehensively, presented a curious spectacle, for he wore a broad-cloth coat, patent leather shoes and a plug hat.

Reprinted from the *Kansas Magazine*, April, 1909.

## *Peffer's Utopia*

IT WAS AFTER THE HEATED CAMPAIGN of 1890 in which the farmers of Kansas acted upon the advice of Mary Elizabeth Lease that William A. Peffer was sent to Washington. . . . Corn was bringing only nine or ten cents a bushel when it could be sold at all. Many farmers hauled their crops to the railroad and finding no buyer, piled it up along the tracks where it lay in huge golden heaps to be seen by railroad passengers. This same corn was selling in Chicago for forty-five to fifty cents a bushel. Wheat was selling in Nebraska for twelve to fifteen cents and at about that price in Kansas. Pork was two to three cents, and butter and eggs, the mainstay of the housewife's budget, found almost no sale at any price.

The burning of corn in Kansas homes instead of coal is an oft repeated story. Corn makes lovely fuel. But while it was burning mortgages were coming due on 90 per cent of the Kansas farms. The prevailing interest rate on real estate loans was 10 per cent. Huge commissions and service charges exacted by mortgage companies raised the ante to 15 and even 20 per cent in some cases. The extra per cent was incorporated in a separate mortgage to evade the law.

When the interest came due, it had to be paid with money raised by chattel mortgages on farm implements and stock. These chattel mortgages drew anything from 20 to 40 and 50 per cent. Seventy-five per cent was not unknown and the government statistics of 1886 cite one instance of where a chattel mortgage drew 375 per cent.

But the Kansas farmer was in no mood to fiddle while his corn burned. He put up a vigorous fight. What he needed most was money. Accordingly five senators and ten representatives were elected and sent to Washington with instructions to get laws through congress to help the farmers. The farmer was not so particular. Any kind of money would do. Just so it was legal tender and there was enough of it.

Frank L. McVey in an article on the Populist movement (1896)



quotes from the New York *Tribune* of December 11, 1894, a resumé of the bills introduced by the senator who made whiskers famous. In all the bills call for a total expenditure of 94 $\frac{1}{4}$  billion dollars. . . .

Senator Peffer proposed to take his 94 $\frac{1}{4}$  billion dollars in convenient denominations ranging from three million up to sixty-eight billion, as the occasion seemed to require. "Money is the great issue," he said. And the wording of the twelve bills cited by the New York *Tribune* indicates that he expected to keep not only the secretary of the treasury fairly busy, but also the mint and printing presses working overtime.

Senate bill No. 1787 was a measure to have the government lend money to states and municipalities without interest. For as the boom of the '80s receded it left many a city, village, county and township hopelessly encumbered with bonded indebtedness. The bill directed "the secretary of the treasury of the United States to redeem 25-year noninterest-paying bonds not to exceed one-half the assessed valuation of any state, territory, county, township, municipality, incorporated town or village, said bonds to be retired at the rate of 4 per cent per annum, and to issue full legal tender notes to the face value of the said bonds." It was estimated twelve billion dollars would be required to carry out the provisions of Peffer's measure.

Senate bill No. 1892 was similar. It provided for the issue of two and one-half billion dollars in legal tender treasury notes "to be lent to the states, counties, townships, cities, incorporated towns and to the people without interest."

Senate bill No. 486 would authorize the issue of 600 million dollars in declaratory legal tender money and for other purposes, and called in all bonds for immediate redemption. Necessary funds, 600 million dollars. It is similar to the present-day demand for the issue of paper money to replace interest-bearing bonds.

Senate bill No. 325 would increase the circulating medium by issuing treasury notes to the amount of 300 million dollars payable in lawful money of the United States.

Senate bill No. 595 provided for the immediate issue and circulation of one-fourth billion dollars in treasury notes.

Just why the two latter bills could not have been made one is not clear at this distance. Perhaps one had been turned down in committee before the other was introduced.

Senate bill No. 916 directed the secretary of the treasury to purchase all silver bullion mined in the United States that may be

offered at \$1.29 an ounce less the charge of coining and that full legal notes shall be issued to eight times the value of the silver so purchased not exceeding fifty million dollars per month for three years. Total amount 1,800 million dollars.

Senate bill No. 1050 was another coinage measure. It provided that the secretary of the treasury be directed to have coined all gold and silver now in possession of the government, also to have issued a sufficient amount of paper, gold and silver money. Six billion dollars was considered in those modest days a "sufficient amount."

Senate bill No. 1177 directed the secretary of the treasury to prepare and issue treasury notes to an amount equal to \$3.50 for every dollar's worth of gold and silver coin and bullion belonging to the United States not set apart or reserved by law. Estimate three million.

Senate bill No. 2029 directed the secretary of the treasury to pay off all interest bearing obligations, all treasury notes, gold and silver certificates and national bank notes and to issue paper money to the amount necessary to pay as aforesaid and also to pay all salaries of officials or wages, and all appropriations made by congress whatsoever. Estimate amount necessary, two billion dollars.

Senate bill No. 976 would establish a bureau of loans on real estate and personal property and the issue of treasury notes equal in amount to \$1.50 for every dollar's worth of gold and silver coin and bullion belonging or coming into the possession of the United States, except the redemption fund, estimated at 800 million dollars.

But the bill that called for the expenditure of the enormous sum of sixty-eight billions was as mysterious and indefinite as Roosevelt's five-billion-dollar request. Senate bill No. 1900 authorized a sufficiency of declaratory—not promissory—full legal tender money not to exceed \$1,000 per capita to establish systems of co-operation and other purposes.

It was estimated that sixty-eight billion dollars would be ample. The census of 1890 enumerated only 63,135,000 persons, but the population was increasing rapidly at that time and even while the congressmen spoke, the population was increasing by millions.

However, on his relief bill, Senator Peffer was reasonably modest. Senate bill No. 1300 called for an appropriation of only \$6,300,000 for immediate use in relieving want and destitution,

but not to exceed in any state, \$1 for every ten persons, an average of ten cents per capita.

Peffer's other eleven bills, if all had passed, would have totaled about \$1,500 per capita, and the senator from Kansas in 1890 no doubt thought that a man with \$1,500 in his pocket could worry along with a dime's worth of relief, or that a family of six people with \$9,000 in hand could do on sixty cents in outdoor aid. Peffer evidently didn't consider where the salary of the "case worker" was to come from. But of course the case worker would have her share of the 94¼ billions.

If the Populists had been able to keep Utopia off their band wagon they might have ridden right into the White House, bands playing and banners floating, and with Mary Elizabeth Lease of Kansas on the front seat, just as they took possession of Topeka on January 9, 1893. For admittedly they favored many measures which have proven to be in line with the best public policy, most of which have been written into our laws or incorporated into our business system.

The Populists advocated parcel post, postal savings, rural delivery, equal suffrage without regard to sex, workmen's compensation, eight-hour labor law, interstate commerce commission, government control of corporations, initiative, referendum and recall, income tax, direct election of senators, Australian ballot system, primary elections, civil service reform, laws against importation of Chinese labor, government control of transportation and telegraph, regulations of organization and control of banks, factory inspection and numerous other things that we now take for granted.

One of the main pleas of the Populists was for government loans to farmers and home owners. . . . [Likewise they advocated] old age pensions and job insurance. . . .

But the siren song of Utopia proved too alluring, and all the good things that were in the program were temporarily obscured by the bally-hoo for easy money. One smiles at the wording of senate bill No. 1050 in which congress is asked to have issued a "sufficient" amount of gold, silver and paper money. The six billion asked for would not have been "sufficient" for very long.

After the Populists were discredited and wiped off the political map the things that were sound and vital in their program were championed by Theodore Roosevelt and gradually became a part of the American system. . . .



As a matter of fact, the Populist leaders were not the ridiculous people that they were pictured by the opposition. Mrs. Lease was a dignified, magnetic and powerful personality, well dressed and with a refined manner, though strenuous of speech.

Senator Pepper did, indeed, have whiskers, but . . . was an educated, polished gentleman, a lawyer and editor of the *Kansas Farmer*. He presented a well-groomed and dignified appearance.

From the *Kansas City Times*, April 13, 1935.

## *Heckled to Fame*

by EVERETT RICH

[Everett Rich, a native of Kansas, is a member of the faculty at Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia.]

THE KANSAS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN of 1896 was the last spasm of a dying revolution. The genesis of the political turmoil lay in the economic predicament of the farmer. In 1890 three-fourths of Kansas farms were mortgaged, and on these mortgages the farmer was struggling to pay an average annual interest of 9 per cent. In many cases, the face of the mortgage was as much as the value of the land. Lyon County, regarded as one of the most prosperous in the state, had a total mortgage indebtedness of \$5,588,600 against a valuation of \$6,493,491. From 1880 to 1890 approximately 450,000 mortgages were written on Kansas property, and about one-third of these "were foreclosed or the property deeded to the holder of the mortgage without legal proceedings." In the first six months of 1890 more than 10,000 farms were either foreclosed or transferred to the mortgage holder to save the expense of foreclosure. In Reno County foreclosures reached the staggering figure of 426 in a single term of court. Farmers, attempting "to hang on" and ever looking forward to higher prices, had plunged farther and farther into debt. To pay interest and taxes, they had had to borrow on their chattels at an annual rate of from 40 per cent to 375 per cent. At the same time, they were burning their corn because they could not exchange it for coal except at a loss, and burying their eggs because they were not worth hauling to market.

Suffering from these and a hundred other ills, real or imaginary, farmers, laborers, and merchants were in the right psychological

state to listen to any Messiah who promised to lead them out of their economic wilderness. And saviors, both men and women, arose by the score. Mary Elizabeth Lease electrified her listeners by telling them that they should "raise less corn and more Hell"; Jerry Simpson rode to national fame by championing the "single-tax," attacking the "grain gamblers," railroads, and kindred groups and organizations; and the names of a half-dozen others became household words throughout the nation. Under the inspiration of these leaders the discontent solidified itself in the form of the Populist Party, and the campaign of 1890 had all the earmarks of a religious reawakening. Tens of thousands flocked to the party gatherings where every man under the influence of a political revivalist became his own authority on the railroads, trusts, finance, taxation, and other topics of the hour.

Attended as it was by religious hysteria, the Populist movement attracted to its ranks the lunatic fringe in politics. On this aspect of the movement, the Republican Party centered its major attack. Without seriously attempting to answer the arguments of the Populists, the Republicans reviled and ridiculed the party by picturing it as a conglomeration of ignoramuses, half-wits and crackpots. The nation at large, out of sympathy with the movement, accepted the vilification at face value. "Sockless" Jerry Simpson is a case in point. Simpson, far from being the clod-hopper of popular imagination, was a cultured gentleman and "of more than usual sense for an American congressman." He was not only a serious student of economics, but widely read in both American and English literature. He had come to Kansas with fifteen thousand dollars; and after seven years of farming, his money was gone and he was city marshal of Medicine Lodge at forty dollars a month. Throwing over his marshal job, he became the farmers' candidate for Congress against James P. Hall, a Civil War colonel, a successful lawyer, a congenial spirit, and an eloquent speaker, "known among his friends as 'Prince Hal.'" Simpson, in attacking Hall, compared his own lowly estate with that of his opponent's and asserted that Hall wore silk underwear. "I can't represent you in Congress in silk underwear," he said; "I can't afford to wear it." Victor Murdock, then a young reporter, substituted "socks" for "underwear" and in reporting the speech quoted Simpson as saying, "Prince Hal wears silk socks; I don't wear any." Murdock's story was accepted as true, and within a week everywhere Simpson was

spoken of as "Sockless" Jerry or "Sockless" Simpson. Later, William Allen White added Socrates, and Simpson "came to be known throughout the length and breadth of the land as the 'Sockless Socrates from Kansas.'"

By 1894, Kansas Populism was definitely on the decline. The Populist Party, which had swept the Republicans from office, had failed to alleviate the general economic suffering. As a consequence, its leaders had fallen out, and were calling each other names. But because the economic situation remained essentially unaltered, the forces of discontent needed but one clear strong voice to rally them. In 1896 the magnificent voice of William Jennings Bryan captured the remnants of this once powerful organization as he earnestly pleaded for the free coinage of silver, and every man became an authority on the currency.

Day by day as the McKinley-Bryan campaign progressed, the young editor of the *Emporia Gazette* laid his offering on the Republican altar. By every rule of self-interest he should have been writing editorials extolling Bryan and denouncing the Republican McKinley. But for some indefinable reason, he thought of himself as a member of the privileged class. When the Populists marched up and down Emporia streets waving banners, "Abolish Interest and You Will Abolish Poverty," he did not see his newspaper profits going to pay the interest on a mortgage—he saw red. Preaching that sort of thing was "lunacy"; it was "anarchy." In unqualified terms he told his readers just that; and for his pains the Populists taunted him with "Silly Willy" and drew a picture of the *Gazette* as a jack-ass and put it into their procession. . . .

But though the young editor was writing as if the fate of the nation were in the balance, he planned to go on a vacation in the very midst of the conflict. Regardless of the threat to the nation, the intensity of a political campaign has never interfered with William Allen White's chucking the whole thing if he decided to do something else. Thus it was that while he was opposing the Fusion Party most vigorously, he set August 15 as the date of his departure for Colorado, where he was to join Mrs. White for a short vacation. Early that Saturday afternoon as he was returning from the post office with an arm load of letters and exchanges, a Populist stepped up to him and began to ply him with questions on a silver argument which he thought White could not answer. White, annoyed at the interruption, was further irritated when a crowd gathered,



which applauded everything his opponent said and jeered all his responses.

Any Saturday afternoon crowd in Emporia in August is largely made up of farmers and "town men of leisure," whether it be in 1896 or at the present time. And in August, 1896, in the midst of a prolonged drought with the thermometer standing at 107 degrees, wheat selling at 40 cents, corn 16, butter 10, chickens 8 if dressed, eggs 6, steers 3, hogs 21½, and the city without a street force because of no money—their political sympathies emphatically did not coincide with those of the editor of the *Gazette*.

"They were naturally for Bryan and the vigor of the campaign in the *Gazette* together with the easy, innocent looking face of its youthful editor, gave them a notion that it would be a lot of fun to play horse with him on the street, which they proceeded to do. A crowd of them, 15 or 20, surrounded him and played froggy-in-the-meadow politically with the young smarty, guying him and reviling him and provoking him to language. But somehow his language got jammed. The madder he got the more he sputtered and the less he spoke, and his face lost all expression except its color. He looked as featureless and as mad as a freshly spanked baby in the combat area, and finally, with his arms full of mail, stalked proudly down the street with a number of thoughts corked up in him."

When White did reach the *Gazette*, he found the printer "howling for more copy for the editorial page." Glancing at his watch to see how much time he had left to catch the train, he plunged into writing, all hot and angry. Sentences "simply rolled off" his pen; and as the pages were completed, the printer took them one by one "hot off the griddle." That evening Democrats and Populists were treated to "What's the Matter with Kansas?" another tirade of "Silly Willy's":

Today the Kansas department of agriculture sent out a statement which indicates that Kansas has gained less than two thousand people in the past year. There are about two hundred and twenty-five thousand families in the state, and there were about ten thousand babies born in Kansas, and yet so many people have left the state that the natural increase is cut down to less than two thousand net.

This has been going on for eight years.

If there had been a high brick wall around the state eight years ago, and not a soul had been admitted or permitted to leave, Kansas would be a half million souls better off than she is today. And yet the nation has increased in population. In five years ten million people have been added to the national

population, yet instead of gaining a share of this—say, half a million—Kansas has apparently been a plague spot, and in the very garden of the world, has lost population by ten thousands every year.

Not only has she lost population, but she has lost money. Every moneyed man in the state who could get out without loss has gone. Every month in every community sees some one who has a little money pack up and leave the state. This has been going on for eight years. Money has been drained out all the time. In towns where ten years ago there were three or four or a half a dozen money lending concerns stimulating industry by furnishing capital, there is now none, or one or two that are looking after the interests and principal already outstanding.

No one brings any money into Kansas any more. What community knows over one or two men who have moved in with more than \$5,000 in the past three years? And what community cannot count half a score of men in that time who have left, taking all the money they could scrape together?

Yet the nation has grown rich, other states have increased in population and wealth—other neighboring states. Missouri has gained over two million, while Kansas has been losing half a million. Nebraska has gained in wealth and population while Kansas has gone down hill. Colorado has gained every way, while Kansas has lost every way since 1888.

What's the matter with Kansas?

There is no substantial city in the state. Every big town save one has lost in population. Yet Kansas City, Omaha, Lincoln, St. Louis, Denver, Colorado Springs, Sedalia, the cities of the Dakotas, St. Paul and Minneapolis and Des Moines—all cities and towns in the West have steadily grown.

Take up the government blue book and you will see that Kansas is virtually off the map. Two or three little scrubby consular places in yellow-fever-stricken communities that do not aggregate ten thousand dollars a year is all the recognition that Kansas has. Nebraska draws about one hundred thousand dollars; little old North Dakota draws about fifty thousand dollars; Oklahoma doubles Kansas; Missouri leaves her a thousand miles behind; Colorado is almost seven times greater than Kansas—the whole West is ahead of Kansas.

Take it by any standard you please, Kansas is not in it.

Go east and you hear them laugh at Kansas, go west and they sneer at her, go south and they "cuss" her, go north and they have forgotten her. Go into any crowd of intelligent people gathered anywhere on the globe, and you will find the Kansas man on the defensive. The newspaper columns and magazines once devoted to praise of her, to boastful facts and startling figures concerning her resources, are now filled with cartoons, jibes and Pefferian speeches. Kansas just naturally isn't in it. She has traded places with Arkansas and Timbuctoo.

What's the matter with Kansas?

We all know; yet here we are at it again. We have an old moss-back Jacksonian who snorts and howls because there is a bathtub in the statehouse; we are running that old jay for governor. We have another shabby, wild-eyed, rattle-brained fanatic who has said openly in a dozen speeches that "the rights of the user are paramount to the rights of the owner"; we are running him for chief justice, so that capital will come tumbling over itself to get into the state. We have raked the old ash heap of failure in the state and found an old human hoop skirt who has failed as a business man, who has failed as an editor, who has failed as a preacher, and we are going to run him for congressman-at-large. He will help the looks of the Kansas delegation at Washington.

Then we have discovered a kid without a law practice and have decided to run him for attorney-general. Then for fear some hint that the state had become respectable might percolate through the civilized portions of the nation, we have decided to send three or four harpies out lecturing, telling the people that Kansas is raising hell and letting the corn go to weeds.

Oh, this is a state to be proud of! We are a people who can hold up our heads! What we need is not more money, but less capital, fewer white shirts and brains, fewer men with business judgment, and more of those fellows who boast that they are "just ordinary clodhoppers, but they know more in a minute about finance than John Sherman"; we need more men who are "posted," who can bellow about the crime of '73, who hate prosperity, and who think because a man believes in national honor, he is a tool of Wall Street. We have had a few of them—some hundred and fifty thousand, but we need more.

We need several thousand gibbering idiots to scream about the "Great Red Dragon" of Lombard Street. We don't need wealth, we don't need well-dressed men on the streets, we don't need cities on the fertile prairies; you bet we don't! What we are after is the money power. Because we have become poorer and ornerier and meaner than a spavined, distempered mule, we, the people of Kansas, propose to kick; we don't care to build up, we wish to tear down.

"There are two ideas of government," said our noble Bryan at Chicago. "There are those who believe that if you just legislate to make the well-to-do prosperous, this prosperity will leak through on those below. The Democratic idea has been that if you legislate to make the masses prosperous their prosperity will find its way up and through every class and rest upon us."

That's the stuff! Give the prosperous man the dickens! Legislate the thriftless man into ease, whack the stuffing out of the creditors and tell the debtors who borrowed the money five years ago when money "per capita" was greater than it is now that the contraction of the currency gives him a right to repudiate.

Whoop it up for the ragged trousers; put the lazy, greasy fizzle who can't pay his debts on the altar, and bow down and worship him. Let the state ideal be high. What we need is not the respect of our fellow men, but the chance to get something for nothing.

Oh, yes, Kansas is a great state. Here are people fleeing from it by the score every day, capital going out of the state by the hundreds of dollars; and every industry but farming paralyzed, and that crippled, because its products have to go across the ocean before they can find a laboring man to work who can afford to buy them. Let's don't stop this year. Let's drive all the decent, self-respecting men out of the state. Let's keep the old clodhoppers who know it all. Let's encourage the man who is "posted." He can talk, and what we need is not mill hands to eat our meat, nor factory hands to eat our wheat, nor cities to oppress the farmer by consuming his butter and eggs and chickens and produce. What Kansas needs is men who can talk, who have large leisure to argue the currency question while their wives wait at home for that nickel's worth of bluing.

What's the matter with Kansas?

Nothing under the shining sun. She is losing wealth, population, and standing. She has got her statesmen, and the money power is afraid of her. Kansas is all right. She has started in to raise hell, as Mrs. Lease advised, and she seems to have an over-production. But that doesn't matter. Kansas never did believe in diversified crops. Kansas is all right. There is absolutely nothing wrong with Kansas. "Every prospect pleases and only man is vile."



In the meantime, William Allen White had boarded the Santa Fe and was proudly bearing the proofs of a little collection of short stories to Mrs. White that they might read them together. So completely had he forgotten the incidents of the afternoon that not even the name of the Populist who provoked the editorial remained in his memory. His temperature, like that of his state which by Monday had broken to 71 degrees in Emporia, had burned itself out. Thus closed the first chapter of "What's the Matter with Kansas?"

The second chapter opens in Chicago. Paul Morton, vice-president of the Santa Fe, "happening to meet Herman Kohlsaatz, publisher of the Chicago *Times-Herald*, told him he had just read an editorial in a little Kansas paper giving a striking picture of conditions which, Morton said, Chicago and the East ought to know about." Kohlsaatz asked Morton to send him the paper, and he reprinted the editorial in both the *Times-Herald* and *Evening Post*. By way of Chicago the piece reached New York, where the *Sun* reprinted it. Then the Republican national committee began turning copies out in 100,000 lots, as the Republican press throughout the country broadcast the editorial to their countless readers. White, vacationing in the Colorado mountains, was totally unaware that he had caught the popular imagination. By the twenty-seventh of August, he, back in Emporia, had learned that Mark Hanna was using his "wail of woe" as a campaign document, and banteringly asked his readers if that ought to "be good for the post office." A month later, although the Republican national committee was to distribute a million copies during the campaign, White had not yet seen a single reprint from that source.

Yet long before this date White knew that he was standing on the threshold of fame. Kohlsaatz wrote him that "the article has attracted more attention than anything that had been published during the campaign." Tom Reed, Speaker of the House of Representatives, wrote that he had "not seen as much sense in one column in a dozen years." Every reputable Republican paper in towns of 50,000 or more had reprinted the editorial. Exchanges were pouring in; letters from individuals and McKinley clubs were sending money and asking for thousands of copies. Edition after edition had to be printed. Eight years later with McKinley in his grave, with Roosevelt in the White House, and with White totally re-

versed in his political attitudes, on the average from two to three letters a week were still dribbling in asking for copies.

Reprinted from *William Allen White, the Man from Emporia*, New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1941, by permission of Rinehart & Co., Inc., Publishers.

## *The Walls of Jericho*

by HERBERT ASBURY

[Herbert Asbury, a native of Missouri, has had a long experience as a newspaperman, magazine writer and editor, and author. He has written fifteen books.]

THE VOTERS OF KANSAS adopted a constitutional amendment in 1880 whereby the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages became illegal except for medical, scientific and mechanical purposes, and the Murray Enforcement Act, passed a year later by the Legislature, was upheld in 1883 by the State Supreme Court. During her residence in the Southwest, Carry Nation had heard glowing reports of the great benefits of the Kansas statutes, and when she removed to Medicine Lodge she expected to dwell in a land wherein the very name of whisky was anathema. But to her horror she found as much drinking as she had seen in Missouri and Texas, for the law was more honored in the breach than in the observance. Every Kansas town had its quota of saloons (popularly called joints and the owners jointists), and in many communities, especially in the larger cities, they were operated as openly as in states which regularly licensed barrooms. In other places they were conducted in the manner of the modern speakeasy, with a front room ostensibly devoted to a restaurant or other legitimate business, and a rear room in which bartenders in white jackets dispensed liquors over real bars. There were few drug stores which did not include among their furnishings a plain board counter and barrels of whisky and beer, and it was seldom that a customer was required to go through the formality of producing a prescription, although such documents were easily obtained from physicians who worked in prosperous harmony with the druggists. And the state fairly teemed with bootleggers, who are said to have acquired their appellation in Kansas and Indian Territory during the early eighteen eighties because of

their habit of carrying bottles of liquor in the legs of their heavy boots.

The burning political question in Kansas during the ten years that preceded Carry Nation's outbreak was resubmission of the prohibition amendment. The potential effectiveness of the law was seriously threatened late in 1890, when the United States Supreme Court held that it could not apply to liquor sent into Kansas from another state and sold from the original package, as such a shipment came within the purview of the inter-state commerce laws. But Congress promptly gave Kansas the necessary power, and thereafter opponents of the amendment concentrated their efforts on spreading re-submission propaganda, and on nullification, hoping by widespread and continual violation to break down the enforcement act entirely and make prohibition unpopular. Breweries and distilleries in Missouri, Illinois and other states, for which Kansas was an important market, provided money for the fight, and several times the temperance people narrowly averted the passage of re-submission resolutions, and apparently innocuous measures which would have legalized the operation of the saloon under various guises.

Carry Nation participated in the struggle against re-submission with characteristic vigor and enthusiasm, but during the early period of her life in Kansas she confined her activities to Barber County. There were seven places in Medicine Lodge where liquor was sold more or less openly, but for several years it did not occur to her to employ force against them; she was content to deliver public denunciations and further the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, of which she and Mrs. Wesley Cain, wife of the Baptist minister, organized a chapter in Medicine Lodge during the middle eighteen nineties. As jail evangelist of the organization, it was Carry Nation's duty to introduce religious and temperance propaganda into the county jail, where the prisoners invariably told her that drink had been chiefly responsible for their troubles. The smoldering hatred of the saloon and all its works, that had so discolored her life since her first husband was buried in a drunkard's grave, was fanned by these revelations into a searing flame of anger, and grew steadily into a determination to rid not only Kansas but the world of the places which she regarded as dens of vice and breeders of sin and misery. She acquired an old hand-organ that was in sad need of tuning, and with Mrs. Cain began



to serenade the saloons and hold impromptu prayer meetings before their swinging doors. They banged loudly upon the wheezy old organ, and in quavering voices sang such hymns as "Nearer, My God, to thee," and "The Prodigal Son." When a crowd had gathered, Carry Nation cried a blistering diatribe against liquor and implored God to smite the "manufacturers of drunkards and the rum-soaked defilers of mankind," while the men who had been drinking inside sneaked out through the back door and left the proprietor alone in his wrath. She interfered seriously with the business of the jointists, and not unnaturally they looked upon her as a pest; they ridiculed her and called her crazy, yet they could not stop her. But they refused to close their places, and the authorities ignored her demands that the law be enforced.

Carry Nation finally decided that drastic measures were necessary. So on a Saturday afternoon late in the summer of 1899, after a day of prayer and fasting, she and Mrs. Wesley Cain donned their best alpaca dresses and their most becoming poke bonnets, and set forth with the hand-organ. Medicine Lodge was filled with farmers in town for their weekly trading, and the spectacle of two motherly old women trudging through the streets lugging a hand-organ and lustily imploring the Lord to lend strength to their arms was a welcome diversion from the traditional lounging at corners and haggling over goods and provisions. Men, women and children promptly fell in behind the crusaders, and when they dropped the organ upon the sidewalk before Mart Strong's saloon, they were quickly surrounded by more than two hundred persons, all waiting impatiently for something to happen. Carry Nation faced the eager and expectant gathering, raised her tightly furled cotton umbrella high above her head and shouted:

"Men and women of Medicine Lodge, this is a joint! Let us pray!"

For a few minutes her voice rose in supplication, while several in the crowd who sympathized with her cried "Amen!" and "Glory to God!" Then, while Mrs. Cain manipulated the organ, Carry Nation flung her umbrella across her shoulders as if it were a musket, and dramatically pushed aside the swinging doors. Cheers broke from the excited crowd, and Carry Nation strode purposefully into the saloon. It is doubtful if Carry Nation herself knew just what she intended to do when she thus entered a saloon for the first time in her life, but whatever her purpose she failed to ac-

comply with it, for she had penetrated no farther than the front room when Mart Strong hurried from the bar and checked her progress. Taking her by the shoulders, he whirled her around, despite her shrieks and the flailing umbrella, and hustled her into the street, crying in great exasperation:

"Get out of here, you crazy woman!"

With tears streaming from her eyes, Carry Nation continued alternately to sing and hurl invective at the saloon-keeper, and Mrs. Cain and half a dozen other women joined in the song. Carry Nation kept trying to enter the saloon, but every time she put her foot over the threshold Mart Strong shoved her back, whereat she redoubled her cries and the voices of her constantly enlarging choir rose in a mighty shout of threatened vengeance. Finally Mart Strong pushed her so violently that she sat down with an audible bump, and James Gano, the town Marshal, who had been fidgeting about in an agony of uncertainty, felt impelled to utter a word of caution:

"Now, Mart! Go easy, Mart!"

The saloon-keeper was in no mood to listen, and when Carry had scrambled to her feet he gave her another vigorous push. She staggered back and caromed off the Marshal, who clutched her arm and voiced a desire that was destined to be heartily repeated during the next few years by harassed officials throughout the United States.

"I wish," said Mr. Gano, wistfully, "that I could take you off the streets."

"Yes!" she cried. "You want to take me, a woman whose heart is breaking to see the ruin of these men, the desolate homes and broken laws, and you a constable oath-bound to close this man's unlawful business. Why don't you do your duty?"

A score of women took up the cry, and the abashed Marshal slipped through the crowd and scurried down an alley, his ears ringing with the chant, "Do your duty! Do your duty!" Mart Strong's frightened customers raced pell mell down a side street, but one, a farm hand who had been imbibing freely, was dragged down from the top of a fence over which he had hoped to escape. Little more than a mass of whirling arms and legs, he was pulled and hustled to the front of the saloon, where he was thrown down before the organ and the women set up a cry:

"A drunkard! A drunkard!"

Carry Nation dropped to her knees and began to pray loudly for his soul, while Mrs. Cain flew furiously at the organ. The old in-

strument wheezed out a tune, and Carry Nation and others sang on and on, with intervals of prayer, while the organ groaned and rattled and the excitement of the crowd mounted rapidly to frenzy, for half a dozen fights had developed, and on all sides the friends and foes of liquor belligerently jostled each other. But presently the bewildered farm hand untangled his legs and struggled upright, and when Carry Nation swooped at him and shouted that his breath reeked horribly with whisky, he plunged through the mob and raced wildly down the street. He was hatless and coatless, but he stayed not to recover his garments. The last seen of him he was scampering madly across the fields beyond the town, with two determined women in full cry behind him. With her horrible example gone, Carry Nation made a final but unsuccessful assault upon Mart Strong's barred doors, and then turned triumphantly homeward, waving her umbrella above her head and singing "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave," for she was experiencing the birth pangs of a new obsession—she felt that she was to be the John Brown of Prohibition.

That evening intense excitement prevailed throughout the town, and men who had for years spent their Saturday nights in the saloons, peacefully drinking, now had nothing to do but stand at street corners and discuss the new terror. Women by the dozen rapped upon the Mayor's door and complained that Carry Nation had been insulted, abused and man-handled by Mart Strong; and they enlarged upon the circumstances until it was noised about that Strong had perpetrated the worst offense in the Midwest's calendar of crimes—that he had horsewhipped a woman. Finally, about midnight, the Mayor and several Councilmen went in a body to Strong's saloon, where they found the saloon-keeper and a few cronies playing cards behind locked doors. The officials expressed surprise and indignation on finding beer and whisky on the premises and sternly told Strong that such wanton trifling with the law would not be tolerated in Medicine Lodge, and that he must leave town immediately or take the consequences. Strong replied that nothing could induce him to remain. He departed next morning, and Carry Nation publicly rejoiced that there were but six joints remaining in Medicine Lodge.

So far as the immediate vicinity of Medicine Lodge was concerned, Carry Nation thus became overnight a figure of the utmost significance, and when she appeared at church next morning flushed



and glowing with pride, she received a tremendous ovation. Early Monday morning she issued an ultimatum calling upon the joint-keepers to close their doors and abandon their wicked traffic, and threatening them both with her own vengeance and that of the Lord. They did not obey her, but they kept out of her way and opened their bars only to trusted drinkers, and for a few days Carry Nation was content to rest upon her laurels and bask in the plaudits of her friends and the glory of past performances. Then a weeping woman walked into the Nation home and said that for six weeks her husband had been drinking steadily in Henry Durst's saloon.

"She had been washing to feed her three children," wrote Carry Nation, "and for some days had had nothing to eat except corn bread and molasses. She said her husband had come home once wild with drink and had kicked over a table and chased his family out of the house."

Carry Nation heard the woman through and spent the next half hour in prayer and meditation. Then she put on her bonnet, took her umbrella and Bible, and, with the drunkard's wife trotting by her side, she marched down the main street of the town. Five men had been drinking at Durst's bar, but when they heard that Carry Nation was once more on the war-path, they fled hastily through the back doorway, and Durst himself, curious to see what was happening and astonished that the women had not attacked his door, make the mistake of stepping into the street. Carry Nation promptly pounced upon him, and clutching his coat lapels she screamed that he would go to hell unless he closed his saloon. Durst twisted away and ran back into the barroom, where he locked and barred the door. But he heard Carry Nation shout to the crowd that if the joint was not closed within three days she would hold a prayer meeting before the entrance twice a day until the saloon-keeper saw the error of his wicked ways, or until God smote him with suffering and disaster. It seemed too big a chance to take, so before the time limit had expired, Durst abandoned his business.

Carry Nation's next foray upon the battlements of Castle Barley-corn resulted in the downfall of Hank O'Bryan, who ostensibly operated a restaurant. On her way home one night, early in 1900, from a particularly stirring prayer meeting Carry Nation went into O'Bryan's place, but found no one in there save Jack Grogan, one of O'Bryan's best customers, who was occasionally employed as bartender. She knew Grogan well, for only a year before she had

labored earnestly to convert him while he was temporarily incarcerated in the county jail for fighting and drinking. He jumped toward a window when he discovered her identity, but he had scarcely gained the sill when Carry Nation clutched his coat-tails and dragged him back. Then she said, sternly:

"You have a dive herel"

"No, Mother Nation," protested Grogan. "You are wrong."

"I smell the horrid drink!" she cried. "Let me see what you have in the back room."

The frightened Grogan led her through several passages, and finally into a small room in which were several tables strewn with empty bottles. Before one of the tables sat a man named Smith, of Sharon, Kansas, who had incurred the enmity of the W.C.T.U. of that town, and for the time being was in exile. Grogan introduced Carry Nation, and Smith looked "terrified and astonished," and hung his head when she made caustic comment upon his presence in a joint.

"You are going to hell," she said, "but I am going to pray to God to have mercy on you. Kneel down."

Humbly, but with visible embarrassment, they knelt, and stared sheepishly at the floor while Carry Nation prayed. Then she told Grogan to inform Hank O'Bryan that he must close his joint or she would close it for him, and having swept the bottles from the table into a broken heap upon the floor, she stalked out and went on her way rejoicing. O'Bryan was so worried by Grogan's tale of his adventure with Carry Nation, and so dismayed by her threat to visit his place again when she could stay longer and accomplish more, that he padlocked his back room, and thereafter confined his business activities to selling food.

Of the four joints left in Medicine Lodge, three closed within a fortnight at the request of the annoyed city and county officials, and Carry Nation joyfully concentrated her attention upon O. L. Day, a druggist who had no permit to sell liquor, but whose store nevertheless became a popular loafing place for known drinkers. Mr. Day was frightened but defiant, and when Carry Nation accused him of concealing whiskey on his premises, he declared indignantly that he had no spirits whatever except a keg of California brandy, which he had purchased for seventy-five dollars and intended to dispense on prescription as soon as he received a permit. But Carry Nation said scornfully and at considerable length that

any physician who gave his patients liquor was a fool and a rummy, and with Mrs. Noble she rushed into the back room, where they found a ten-gallon keg tucked away under the prescription counter. Carry Nation turned the keg over and rolled it into the front room, crying loudly:

"Women, this is the whisky!"

"That's my fine California brandy!" cried the druggist, frantically.

"It's devil's brew to destroy the souls of men!" retorted Carry Nation.

Mr. Day and his clerk rushed forward and seized one end of the keg, while Marshal Gano, who had scented mischief and followed the women into the store, grabbed the other end. But Carry Nation promptly straddled the keg, and they could not dislodge her, although they pushed and hauled vigorously, unmindful of her shrieks.

"That's private property, Mother Nation!" cried the Marshal. "Let it be!"

"It's the broth of hell!" yelled Carry Nation. "Women, help!"

Finally the exasperated Marshal caught her shoulders and pressed her head against his chest with such force that she feared her neck would be broken. She redoubled her cries for aid, whereupon Mrs. Noble clutched the Marshal's coat collar and yanked him away. Carry Nation then triumphantly rolled the keg into the street, where the main body of the attackers was drawn up in straggly formation, while Mrs. Wesley Cain marched back and forth before them, declaiming loudly:

"Don't any one touch these women! They are Christian women trying to save the boys of our state!"

Meanwhile the Marshal had concluded that his official presence was required at the other end of the town, and the several score of men and women who had gathered to watch the raid cheered or hooted, according to their sympathies. Carry Nation dispatched an emissary to a hardware store to borrow a hatchet, but the owner of the emporium indignantly refused to lend the tool. Mrs. Noble then invaded a blacksmith shop and returned lugging a huge sledgehammer, with which Carry Nation smashed the side of the keg. The liquor spouted high into the air, and its pungent odor drew men from all parts of the town as molasses draws flies. They stood hopefully about waiting for the crusaders to depart, but they were



disappointed, for after Carry Nation had filled a bottle she poured the remainder of the liquor into the gutter and set it afire. Then the triumphant women returned to the W.C.T.U. rooms, where they held a prayer and praise service for several hours.

For the first time since Kansas had voted for Prohibition, Medicine Lodge was free of joints, to the great glee of Carry Nation and the bootleggers, who found the town an excellent market. But the friends of liquor were not satisfied to let matters rest for a while and bide their time. They attempted reprisals, and with the incredible stupidity which has always marked the blundering progress of the saloon through American life, they employed force in a futile attempt to swerve Carry Nation from what she considered her sacred duty. Gangs of hoodlums which she described as the "Republican rum element," attacked her home and that of Mrs. Wesley Cain, smashing windows and doors with stones, wrecking Carry Nation's buggy, and cutting her harness. These and similar imbecilities soon aroused on behalf of Carry Nation the active sympathy of many influential citizens who had hitherto opposed her militant religiosity and her crusades against liquor; and among the members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and in the poorer sections where the women were the principal sufferers from drink, she assumed the importance of an oracle, and the spiritual stature of one destined to wear the crown of martyrdom. . . .

For many years she had been sporadically addicted to the practice of bibliomancy, and often decided important questions by interpreting a Scriptural passage thus chosen at random. She now employed this system of divination incessantly, and improved upon the usual method by opening her Bible and, with her eyes tightly shut, jabbing a pin at the page, and attempting to read encouragement in the verse thus impaled. But she found nothing that satisfied her until the late afternoon of June 5, 1900, when the pin quivered in the first verse of the sixtieth chapter of Isaiah: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Carry Nation interpreted this to mean that at last God was ready to send her forth upon the mission for which she had so obviously been chosen. In a flutter of delight she donned a sackcloth garment and flew into the street, where she ran back and forth in front of her home, madly dancing and singing. To a friend who passed and inquired the cause of the outburst she replied, "There is to be a change in my life!" Throughout the evening, with ashes

upon her head, she knelt in her kitchen waiting for further instructions. But none came, and that night, while her friends throughout the town were sadly shaking their heads and saying sorrowfully that she had lost her mind, she flung herself on the floor at the foot of her bed and poured out her agony in prayer: "Oh, God, you see the treason in Kansas. They are going to break the mothers' hearts; they are going to send the boys to drunkards' graves and a drunkard's hell. I have exhausted all my means. Oh, Lord, you have plenty of ways. You have saved the base things and the weak things; use me to save Kansas. I have but one life to give you. If I had a thousand, I would give them all. Please show me something to do." She went to sleep by the side of her husband, and slumbered peacefully until dawn, when she was awakened by a musical voice that murmured in her ear, "Go to Kiowa!" The order was thrice repeated, and then she felt her hands lifted and thrown down upon the bed covers, and heard plainly, "I'll stand by you!" This assurance of support was clear and distinct, and was followed by another command, which did not appear to have been spoken, but which she felt was forcibly impressed upon her heart and mind. And it was of the utmost significance, and destined to have far-reaching results:

"Take something in your hands and throw at those places and smash them!"

Carry Nation arose from bed in a transport of joy, for she felt that now the Lord had, in the fifty-fourth year of her age, identified her task and definitely pointed out to her the path upon which she must tread. And she felt gloriously certain that the way would be strewn with the thorn and stubble of persecution and revilement. During the morning she went about her household duties singing, and at intervals she walked into the back yard and picked up stones and brickbats (she wrecked several saloons with stones and iron bars before she ever used a hatchet), which she carried into the house in her apron and wrapped one by one in old newspapers. At half-past three o'clock in the afternoon she had accumulated a great pile of missiles, and was ready to obey the command of the musical voice to go to Kiowa. She hitched her horse to the buggy, drove out of the stable lot, and set out down the long, dusty road. The horse chose his own gait, for she sat with the reins held loosely in her hands, lips moving in prayer and rapt gaze turned to heaven.

Carry Nation had expected to spend the night with a friend who

lived about half-way between Kiowa and Medicine Lodge, but as she neared the farm-house she was more and more impressed with the notion that she must go on to Kiowa. Yet the sun was slowly setting, and she did not relish a night drive along a lonesome road. So she invoked divine guidance. "Oh, Lord," she prayed, "if it be Thy will for me to go to Kiowa have Prince [her horse] pass this open gate," knowing that the animal would never do so unless God commanded it. She shook the reins, and as the horse lazily started to turn toward the gate, an unseen hand smote him smartly upon the rump. He jumped forward, and the buggy rattled swiftly down the road, with Carry Nation joyfully shouting and singing. She reached Kiowa at eighty-thirty o'clock, and slept at the home of a friend without divulging the purpose of her visit. Next morning she hitched Prince to her buggy and set out upon the first real smashing expedition of her career. She drove to Dobson's saloon, and with a dozen or more brick-bats and stones stacked neatly upon her left arm she pushed open the door and entered, to find the proprietor swabbing the bar and a half dozen men drinking pick-me-ups. They stared unbelievably as the motherly old woman approached them, but started nervously when she suddenly stopped and shouted:

"Men! I have come to save you from a drunkard's fate!"

Mr. Dobson, who had known Carry Nation for years, sighed and came from behind the bar, while his customers hurriedly gulped their drinks and edged stealthily toward the back door.

"Now, Mother Nation," began Mr. Dobson, soothingly.

"I told you last spring to close this place, Mr. Dobson," said Carry Nation, sternly, "and you did not do it. Now I have come here with another remonstrance. Get out of the way. I do not want to strike you, but I am going to break this place up."

The saloon-keeper attempted to placate her, but she ignored him and flung her brickbats and stones hard and fast. The first missile smashed the mirror behind the bar, and as Mr. Dobson winced at the spectacle, a torrent of paper-covered stones shattered bottles and glasses.

"My strength," Carry Nation said afterward, "was that of a giant. I felt invincible. God was certainly standing by now." Not knowing what else to do, the owner of the saloon retreated to a corner, where he remained silent but suffering while Carry Nation swept a devastating passage through his property. But she had not forgotten



him. When the last of her missiles had been hurled and the interior of the bar-room lay in ruins, she turned to him and said, "Now, Mr. Dobson, I have finished. God be with you." Mr. Dobson's reply has not been preserved for posterity. Singing her favorite battle song, "Who hath sorrow? Who hath woe?" she plunged into another saloon a block from Dobson's and wrecked it before the astounded bartender and proprietor could make any effective resistance against the hail of stones and brickbats. Expressing the wish that God be with them also, she raced madly across the way to Lewis's saloon, where a young man, little more than a boy, was polishing glasses behind the bar. The few customers in the place fled out the back door when the dumpy figure of the excited crusader bulked large in the doorway, and as the youthful bartender gaped at her she cried:

"Young man, come from behind that bar! Your mother did not raise you for such a place!"

She flung a brick at his head, and as it raised his hair in passing, he hastened to obey her command. Bent almost double, he weaved swiftly across the room and through the open door, and scurried away with his white apron flapping in the breeze. Carry Nation swept the bar clean of bottles and glassware, ripped half a dozen sporting prints from the walls, overturned a few beer-stained tables, kicked and wrenched the rungs from several chairs, and then turned her attention to the long mirror, in which she fancied she saw the reflection of Satan's grinning countenance. She hurled a brick at it, but the mirror was thick plate glass and did not break, so she searched the wreckage for a better missile. She found a heavy billiard ball, and threw it with such force that both the mirror and Satan were splintered and fell to the floor with a crash, bringing with them a score of bottles from the shelf behind the bar. By this time the news that Carry Nation was in town had penetrated throughout Kiowa, and when she emerged from Lewis's saloon into an atmosphere redolent with the pungent fumes of whisky and beer, she found several hundred persons pushing and shoving in the narrow street. The crowd fell back while she gathered stones and flung them through the windows, and then she turned and cried:

"Men of Kiowa, I have destroyed three of your places of business. If I have broken a statute of Kansas, put me in jail. If I am not a lawbreaker, your Mayor and Councilmen are. You must arrest one of us, for if I am not a criminal they are."

She clambered into her buggy and gathered up the reins, but the city Marshal caught Prince's bridle and asked her to talk to the Mayor before returning to Medicine Lodge. So while Carry Nation triumphantly sang a hymn, the Marshal led the horse to the outskirts of the crowd, where Mayor Korn stood with the owner of one of the wrecked saloon buildings.

"Just a moment, Mother Nation," said the Mayor, and retired to join a group of city officials, who were in earnest consultation with the city attorney, striving desperately to find a way of enforcing their local ordinances. But Carry Nation had placed them in a very embarrassing position. It was obvious that she had violated the law by destroying private property, but it was even more obvious that in so doing she had procured convincing evidence that saloons were operating openly in Kiowa. The usual procedure would have been to arrest her and bring her to trial on charges of disorderly conduct and malicious mischief, but the officials shuddered at the thought of the hullabaloo the temperance people would raise, and the pointed questions that would be asked about the joints. So it was finally decided that nothing had occurred, and the Marshal dropped his hand from Prince's bridle and said, disgustedly:

"Go home!"

Meagre details of Carry Nation's exploits and her successful defiance of the Kiowa officials had been telegraphed to Medicine Lodge, and when she reached the outskirts of the latter town, she was met by a dozen excited members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, who lined the road and sang joyfully as the crusader drove between their ranks, shouting "Peace on earth, good will to men!" The singing women crowded behind her buggy as it rolled down the main thoroughfare, and practically the entire population of Medicine Lodge swarmed into the street and implored her to recount her adventures.

Next morning the Wichita and Topeka papers contained brief accounts of the Kiowa raid, and Carry Nation received scores of letters and telegrams from women all over the state. But many branches of the Women's Christian Temperance Union displayed distinct coldness and disapproval. A few chapters sent congratulatory messages; others, especially those of the larger cities where the saloon was an accepted industry, preserved an ominous silence. Nor was there any word of commendation from Mrs. A. M. Hutchinson, state president of the W. C. T. U., whose husband was resi-

dent physician of the State Reformatory at Hutchinson, Kansas, and an appointee of the Governor. Some three or four weeks later, during a temperance convention under the auspices of the Barber County chapter of the Union, Mrs. Hutchinson visited Medicine Lodge and asked Carry Nation to inform the gathering that officially the Women's Christian Temperance Union knew nothing of, and would not accept responsibility for, the smashing at Kiowa. Carry Nation so announced at a meeting of the convention, and then she volunteered this comment: "So far as Sister Hutchinson, who is and has been president for some time, is concerned, I believe her to be a conscientious woman, whose heart is in the right place. She and I have been the best of friends and love each other, and she has often defended me and spoken well of my work. But I think the W. C. T. U. would be much more effective under her management if she had understood that Stanley, the Republican Governor, wished to handicap her in her prohibition work when he appointed her husband as physician in the reformatory. And perhaps other bearings have prevented her from seeing the Republican pressure has injured her work more than anything else in Kansas. Many of the wives of these political wire-pullers are prominent in the Union."

Even Carry Nation's enemies were compelled, however, to acknowledge that her extraordinary methods had produced definite and concrete results, for in less than six months she had done more to enforce the prohibition laws than had been accomplished in twenty years by the ineffectual campaigns of the churches and temperance organizations. Throughout southern Kansas she was the heroine of the extremists who prayed for the downfall of the saloon, however procured, though there were many temperance advocates in Kiowa and Medicine Lodge who shook their heads dubiously and deplored the violence which had accompanied her crusades. . . .

Reprinted from the *Outlook*, July 31, 1929, by the author's permission.

### *The Home-Coming of Colonel Hucks*

[William Allen White was one, and perhaps the last, of the great personal editors. He made his name synonymous with that of the *Emporia Gazette*; and at the time of his death in 1944, he was the best-known newspaper editor in America. He was in the national spotlight for nearly half a century and exercised a pronounced influence in literature, journalism, and politics. He was the author of a score of books.]



A GENERATION AGO, a wagon covered with white canvas turned to the right on the California road, and took a northerly course toward a prairie stream that nestled just under a long, low bluff. When the white pilgrim, jolting over the rough, unbroken ground, through the tall "blue stem" grass, reached a broad bend in the stream, it stopped. A man and a woman emerged from under the canvas, and stood for a moment facing the wild, green meadow, and the distant hills. The man was young, lithe, and graceful, but despite his boyish figure the woman felt his unconscious strength, as he put his arm about her waist. She was aglow with health; her fine, strong, intelligent eyes burned with hope, and her firm jaw was good to behold. They stood gazing at the virgin field a moment in silence. There were tears in the woman's eyes, as she looked up after the kiss and said:

"And this is the end of our wedding journey; and—and—the honey-moon—the only one we can ever have in all the world—is over."

The horses, moving uneasily in their sweaty harness, cut short the man's reply. When he returned, his wife was getting the cooking utensils from under the wagon, and life—stern, troublous—had begun for them.

It was thus that young Colonel William Hucks brought his wife to Kansas.

They were young, strong, hearty people, and they conquered the wilderness. A home sprang up in the elbow of the stream. In the fall, long rows of corn shocks trailed what had been the meadow. In the summer the field stood horse-high with corn. From the bluff, as the years flew by, the spectator might see the checkerboard of the farm, clean cut, well kept, smiling in the sun. Little children frolicked in the king row, and hurried to school down the green lines of the lanes where the hedges grow. Once, a slow procession, headed by a spring wagon with a little black box in it, might have been seen filing between the rows of the half-grown poplar trees and out across the brown, stubble-covered prairie, to a desolate hill and the graveyard. Now, neighbors from miles around may be heard coming in rattling wagons across vale and plain, laden with tin presents; after which the little home is seen ablaze with lights, while the fiddle vies with the mirth of the rollicking party, dancing with the wanton echoes of the bluff across the stream.

There were years when the light in the kitchen burned far into

the night, when two heads bent over the table, figuring to make ends meet. In these years the girlish figure became bent, and the light faded in the woman's eyes, while the lithe figure of the man was gnarled by the rigors of the struggle. There were days—not years, thank God—when lips forgot their tenderness; and, as fate tugged fiercely at the curbed bit, there were times, when souls rebelled, and cried out in bitterness and despair, at the roughness of the path.

In this wise went Colonel William Hucks and his wife through youth into maturity, and in this wise they faced towards the sunset.

He was tall, with a stoop; grizzled, brawny, perhaps uncouth in mien. She was stout, unshapely, rugged; yet her face was kind and motherly. There was a boyish twinkle left in her husband's eyes and a quaint, quizzing, one-sided smile often stumbled across his care-furrowed countenance. As the years passed, Mrs. Hucks noticed that her husband's foot fell heavily when he walked by her side, and the pang she felt when she first observed his plodding step was too deep for tears. It was in these days, that the minds of the Huckses unconsciously reverted to old times. It became their wont, in these latter days, to sit in the silent house, whence the children had gone out to try issue with the world, and of evenings, to talk of the old faces and the old places, in the home of their youth. Theirs had been a pinched and busy life. They had never returned to visit their old Ohio home. The Colonel's father and mother were gone. His wife's relatives were not there. Yet each felt a longing to go back. For years they had talked of the charms of the home of their childhood. Their children had been brought up to believe that the place was little less than heaven. The Kansas grass seemed short, and barren of beauty to them, beside the picture of the luxury of Ohio's fields. For them the Kansas streams did not ripple and dimple so merrily in the sun as the Ohio brooks, that romped through dewy pastures, in their memories. The bleak Kansas plain, in winter and in fall, seemed to the Colonel and his wife to be ugly and gaunt, when they remembered the brow of the hill under which their first kiss was shaded from the moon, while the world grew dim under a sleigh that bounded over the turnpike. The old people did not give voice to their musings. But in the woman's heart there gnawed a yearning for the beauty of the old scenes. It was almost a physical hunger.

After their last child, a girl, had married, and had gone down

the lane toward the lights of the village, Mrs. Hucks began to watch with a greedy eye the dollars mount toward a substantial bank-account. She hoped that she and her husband might afford a holiday.

Last year, Providence blessed the Huckses with plenty. It was the woman, who revived the friendship of youth in her husband's cousin, who lives in the old township in Ohio. It was Mrs. Hucks, who secured from that cousin an invitation to spend a few weeks in the Ohio homestead. It was Mrs. Hucks, again, who made her husband happy by putting him into a tailor's suit—the first he had bought since his wedding—for the great occasion. Colonel Hucks needed no persuasion to take the trip. Indeed, it was his wife's economy which had kept him from being a spendthrift, and from borrowing money with which to go, on a dozen different occasions.

The day which Colonel and Mrs. William Hucks set apart for a starting upon their journey was one of those perfect Kansas days in early October. The rain had washed the summer's dust from the air, clearing it, and stenciling the lights and shades very sharply. The woods along the little stream, which flowed through the farm, had not been greener at any time during the season. The second crop of grass on the hillside almost sheened in vividness. The yellow of the stubble in the grain fields was all but a glittering golden. The sky was a deep, glorious blue, and big, downy clouds which lumbered lazily here and there in the depths of it, appeared near and palpable.

As Mrs. Hucks "did up" the breakfast dishes for the last time before leaving for the town to take the cars, she began to feel that the old house would be lonesome without her. The silence that was about to come, seemed to her to be seeping in, and it made her feel creepy. In her fancy she petted the furniture as she "set it to rights," saying mentally, that it would be a long time before the house would have her care again. To Mrs. Hucks every bit of furniture brought up its separate recollection, and there was a hatchet-scarred chair in the kitchen which had come with her in the wagon from Ohio. Mrs. Hucks felt that she could not leave that chair. All the while she was singing softly, as she went about her simple tasks. Her husband was puttering around the barnyard, with the dog under his feet. He was repeating for the twentieth time, the instructions to a neighbor about the care of the stock, when it occurred to him to go into the house and dress. After this was



accomplished the old couple paused outside the front door while Colonel Hucks fumbled with the key. "Think of it, Father," said Mrs. Hucks as she turned to descend from the porch. "Thirty years ago—and you and I have been fighting so hard out here—since you let me out of your arms to look after the horses. Think of what has come—and—and—gone, Father, and here we are alone, after it all."

"Now, Mother, I—" but the woman broke in again with:

"Do you mind how I looked that day? O, William, you were so fine, and so handsome then! What's become of my boy—my young—sweet—strong—glorious boy?"

Mrs. Hucks's eyes were wet, and her voice broke at the end of the sentence.

"Mother," said the Colonel, as he went around the corner of the house, "just wait a minute till I see if this kitchen door is fastened."

When he came back, he screwed up the corner of his mouth into a droll, one-sided smile and said, with a twinkle in his eyes, to the woman emerging from her handkerchief:

"Mother, for a woman of your age, I should say you had a mighty close call to being kissed, just then. That kitchen door was all that saved you."

"Now, Pa, don't be silly," was all that Mrs. Hucks had the courage to attempt, as she climbed into the buggy.

Colonel Hucks and his wife went down the road, each loath to go and leave the home-place without their care. Their ragged, uneven flow of talk was filled with more anxiety about the place which they were leaving, than it was with the joys anticipated at their journey's end. The glories of Ohio, and the wonderful green of its hills, and the cool of its meadows, veined with purling brooks, was a picture that seemed to fade in the mental vision of this old pair, when they turned the corner that hid their Kansas home from view. Mrs. Hucks kept reverting in her mind to her recollection of the bedroom, which she had left in disorder. The parlor and the kitchen formed a mental picture in the housewife's fancy, which did not leave place for speculations about the glories into which she was about to come. In the cars, Colonel Hucks found himself leaning across the aisle, bragging mildly about Kansas, for the benefit of a traveling man from Cincinnati. When the Colonel and his wife spread their supper on their knees in the Kansas City Union Depot, the recollection that it was the little buff Cochiti

pullet which they were eating made Mrs. Hucks very homesick. The Colonel, being reminded of this, was meditative also.

They arrived at their destination in the night. Mrs. Hucks and the woman of the homestead refreshed old acquaintance in the bedroom and in the kitchen, while the Colonel and the men sat stiffly in the parlor, and called the roll of the dead and absent. In the morning, while he was waiting for his breakfast, Colonel Hucks went for a prowl down in the cow lot. It seemed to him that the creek which ran through the lot was dry and ugly. He found a stone upon which as a boy he had stood and fished. He remembered it as a huge boulder, and he had told his children wonderful tales about its great size. It seemed to him that it had worn away one half in thirty years. The moss on the river bank was faded and old, and the beauty for which he had looked, was marred by a thousand irregularities, which he did not recall in the picture of the place that he had carried in his memory since he left it.

Colonel Hucks trudged up the bank from the stream with his hands clasped behind him, whistling "O, Lord, Remember Me," and trying to reconcile the things he had seen, with those he had expected to find. At breakfast he said nothing of his puzzle, but as Mrs. Hucks and the Colonel sat in the parlor alone, during the morning, while their cousins were arranging to take the Kansas people over the neighborhood in the buggy, Mrs. Hucks said:

"Father, I've been lookin' out the window, and I see they've had such a dreadful drouth here. See that grass there, it's as short and dry—and the ground looks burneder and crackededer than it does in Kansas."

"Uhm, yes," replied the Colonel. "I had noticed that myself. Yet crops seem a pretty fair yield this year."

As the buggy in which the two families were riding rumbled over the bridge, the Colonel, who was sitting in the front seat, turned to the woman in the back seat and said:

"Lookie there, Mother, they've got a new mill—smaller'n the old mill, too."

To which his cousin responded, "Bill Hucks, what's got into you, anyway! That's the same old mill, where me and you used to steal pigeons."

The Colonel looked closer, and drawled out, "Well, I be doggoned! What makes it look so small? Ain't it smaller, Mother?" he asked, as they crossed the mill-race, that seemed to the Colonel

to be a diminutive affair, compared with the roaring mill-race in which as a boy he had caught minnows.

The party rode on thus for half an hour, chatting, leisurely, when Mrs. Hucks, who had been keenly watching the scenery for five minutes, pinched her husband and cried enthusiastically, as the buggy was descending a little knoll:

"Here 't is, Father! This is the place!"

"What place?" asked the Colonel, who was head over heels in the tariff.

"Don't you know, William?" replied his wife with a tremble in her voice, which the woman beside her noticed.

Every one in the buggy was listening. The Colonel looked about him; then, turning to the woman beside his wife on the seat, he said:

"This is the place where I mighty nigh got tipped over trying to drive two horses to a sleigh, with the lines between my knees. Mother and me have remembered it, someway, ever since." And the old man stroked his grizzled beard, and tried to smile on the wrong side of his face, that the woman might see his joke. They exchanged meaningful glances when the Colonel turned away, and Mrs. Hucks was proudly happy. Even the dullness of the color on the grass, which she had remembered as a luscious green, did not sadden her for half an hour.

When the two Kansas people were alone that night, the Colonel asked:

"Don't it seem kind of dwarfed here—to what you expected it would be? Seems to me like it's all shriveled, and worn out, and old. Everything's got dust on it. The grass on the road is dusty. The trees that used to seem so tall and black with shade are just nothing like what they used to be. The hills I've thought of as young mountains don't seem to be so big as our bluff back—back home."

Kansas was "home" to them now. For thirty years the struggling couple on the prairie had kept the phrase "back home" sacred to Ohio. Each felt a thrill at the household blasphemy, and both were glad that the Colonel had said "back home," and that it meant Kansas.

"Are you sorry you come, Father?" said Mrs. Hucks, as the Colonel was about to fall into a doze.

"I don't know, are you?" he asked.

"Well, yes, I guess I am. I haven't no heart for this, the way



it is, and I've some way lost the picture I had fixed in my mind of the way it was. I don't care for this, and yet it seems like I do, too. Oh, I wish I hadn't come, to find everything so washed out—like it is!"

And so they looked at pictures of youth through the eyes of age. How the colors were faded! What a tragic difference there is between the light which springs from the dawn, and the glow which falls from the sunset.

After the first day Colonel Hucks did not restrain his bragging about Kansas. And Mrs. Hucks gave rein to her pride when she heard him. Before that day she had reserved a secret contempt for a Kansas boaster, and had ever wished that he might see what Ohio could do in the particular line which he was praising. But now, Mrs. Hucks caught herself saying to her hostess, "What small ears of corn you raise here!"

The day after this concession Mrs. Hucks began to grow homesick. At first, she worried about the stock; the Colonel's chief care was about the dog. The fifth day's visit was their last. As they were driving to the town to take the train for Kansas, Mrs. Hucks overheard her husband, discoursing, something after this fashion:

"I tell you, Jim, before I'd slave my life out on an 'eighty' the way you're doin', I'd go out takin' in whitewashin'. It's just like this—a man in Kansas has lower taxes, better schools, and more advantages in every way, than you've got here. And as for grasshoppers? Why, Jim West, sech talk makes me tired! My boy Bill's been always born and raised in Kansas, and now he's in the legislature, and in all his life, since he can remember, he never seen a hopper. Wouldn't know one from a sacred ibex, if he met it in the road."

While the women were sitting in the buggy at the depot waiting for the train, Mrs. Hucks found herself saying:

"And as for fruit—why, we fed apples to the hogs this fall. I sold the cherries, all but what was on one tree near the house, and I put up sixteen quarts from just two sides of that tree, and never stepped my foot off the ground to pick 'em."

When they were comfortably seated on the homeward-bound train, Mrs. Hucks said to her husband:

"How do you suppose they live here in this country, anyway, Father? Don't any one here seem to own any of the land joinin' them, and they'd no more think of puttin' in water tanks and

windmills around their farms than they'd think of flyin'. I just wish Mary could come out and see my new kitchen sink with the hot and cold water in it. Why, she almost fainted when I told her how to fix a dreem for her dishwater and things." Then after a sigh she added, "But they ar so onprogressive here, now-a-days."

That was the music which the Colonel loved, and he took up the strain, and carried the tune for a few miles. Then it became a duet, and the two old souls were very happy.

They were overjoyed at being bound for Kansas. They hungered for kindred spirits. At Peoria, in the early morning, they awakened from their chair-car naps to hear a strident female voice saying:

"Well, sir, when the rain did finally come, Mr. Morris he just didn't think there was a thing left worth cutting on the place, but lo, and behold, we got over forty bushel to the acre off of that field, as it was."

The Colonel was thoroughly awake in an instant, and he nudged his wife, as the voice went on:

"Mr. Morris he was so afraid the wheat was winter killed; all the papers said it was; and then come the late frost, which every one said had ruined it—but law me—"

Mrs. Hucks could stand it no longer. With her husband's cane she reached the owner of the voice, and said.

"Excuse me, ma'am, but what part of Kansas are you from?"

It seemed like meeting with a dear relative. The rest of the journey to Kansas City was a hallelujah chorus, wherein the Colonel sang a powerful and telling base.

When he crossed the Kansas state line Colonel Hucks began, indeed, to glory in his state. He pointed out the school-houses, that rose in every village, and he asked his fellow-passenger to note that the school-house is the most important piece of architecture in every group of buildings. He told the history of every rod of ground along the Kaw to Topeka. He dilated eloquently, and at length, upon the coal mines in Osage county, and he pointed with pride to the varied resources of his state. Every prospect was pleasing to Colonel Hucks, as he rode home that beautiful October day, and his wife was more radiantly happy than she had been for many years.

"What is it that fool Riley feller says about 'Grigsby's Station, where we used to be so happy and so pore?'"

As the Colonel and his wife passed out of the town into the quiet country, where the shadows were growing long and black, and

where the gentle blue haze was hanging over the distant hills, that undulated the horizon, a silence fell upon the two hearts. Each mind sped back over a lifetime to the evening when they had turned out of the main road, in which they were traveling. A dog barking in the meadow behind the hedge did not startle them from their reveries. The restless cattle, wandering down the hillside toward the bars, made a natural complement to the picture which they loved.

"It is almost sunset, Father," said the wife, as she put her hand upon her husband's arm.

Her touch, and the voice in which she had spoken tightened some cord at his throat. The Colonel could only repeat, as he avoided her gaze:

"Yes, almost sunset, Mother, almost sunset."

"It has been a long day, William, but you have been good to me. Has it been a happy day for you, Father?"

The Colonel turned his head away. He was afraid to trust himself to speech. He clucked to the horses and drove down the lane. As they came into the yard, the Colonel put an arm about his wife and pressed his cheek against her face. Then he said drolly:

"Now—lookie at that dog,—come tearin' up here like he never saw white folks before!"

And so Colonel William Hucks brought his wife back to Kansas. Here their youth is woven into the very soil they love; here every tree around their home has its sacred history; here every sky above recalls some day of trial and of hope.

Here in the gloaming to-night stands an old man, bent and grizzled. His eyes are dimmed with tears, which he would not acknowledge for the world, and he is dreaming strange dreams, while he listens to a little, cracked voice in the kitchen, half humming and half singing:

"Home again, home again,  
From a foreign shore."

Reprinted from *The Real Issue*, Chicago: Way and Williams, 1896.



# XI.

## An Interpretation

*During the half century spanned by this collection of writings, Kansas was much written about. This was sometimes due to the fact that local or state issues became national issues—thus the saying that whatever happens will happen in Kansas first. The interpretation of Kansas which follows has long been acclaimed a brilliant analysis of the Kansas spirit. No analysis, however, can quite escape its time. Carl Becker was writing when the progressives of both old parties were ushering in a new heaven and a new earth, when Kansas was one of the brightest stars in that firmament. In a half dozen years Germany was to march through Belgium and the first World War was to be on, ushering in a time when Kansans, like other Americans, were increasingly to turn their minds from things domestic to things international.*

*Kansas*

by CARL BECKER

[Carl Becker, a native of Iowa, is one of America's most highly respected historians. He taught history at the University of Kansas from 1908 to 1916. From Kansas he went to Cornell, where he was a member of the faculty until his death.]

SOME YEARS AGO, in a New England college town, when I informed one of my New England friends that I was preparing to go to Kansas, he replied rather blankly, "Kansas?! Oh." The amenities of casual intercourse demanded a reply, certainly, but from the point of view of my New England friend I suppose there was really nothing more to say; and, in fact, standing there under the peaceful New England elms, Kansas did seem tolerably remote. Some months later I rode out of Kansas City and entered for the first time what I had always pictured as the land of grasshoppers, of arid drought, and barren social experimentation. In the seat just ahead were two young women, girls rather, whom I afterwards saw at the university. As we left the dreary yards behind, and entered the half-open country along the Kansas River, one of the pair, breaking abruptly away from the ceaseless chatter that had hitherto engrossed them both,

began looking out of the car window. Her attention seemed fixed, for perhaps a quarter of an hour, upon something in the scene outside—the fields of corn, or it may have been the sunflowers that lined the track; but at last, turning to her companion with the contented sigh of a returning exile, she said, “*Dear old Kansas!*” The expression somehow recalled my New England friend. I wondered vaguely, as I was sure he would have done, why anyone should feel moved to say “*Dear old Kansas!*” I had supposed that Kansas, even more than Italy, was only a geographical expression. But not so. Not infrequently, since then, I have heard the same expression—not always from emotional young girls. To understand why people say “*Dear old Kansas!*” is to understand that Kansas is no mere geographical expression, but a “state of mind,” a religion, and a philosophy in one.

The difference between the expression of my staid New England friend and that of the enthusiastic young Kansan is perhaps symbolical, in certain respects, of the difference between those who remain at home and those who, in successive generations, venture into the unknown “West”—New England or Kansas—wherever it may be. In the seventeenth century there was doubtless no lack of Englishmen—prelates, for example, in lawn sleeves, comfortably buttressed about by tithes and the Thirty-nine Articles—who might have indicated their point of view quite fully by remarking, “New England? Oh.” Whether any New Englander of that day ever went so far as to say “*Dear old New England!*” I do not know. But that the sentiment was there, furnishing fuel for the inner light, is past question. Nowadays the superiority of New England is taken for granted, I believe, by the people who live there; but in the seventeenth century, when its inhabitants were mere frontiersmen, they were given, much as Kansans are said to be now, to boasting—alas! even of the climate. In 1629, Mr. Higginson, a reverend gentleman, informed his friends back in England that “the temper of the air of New England is one special thing that commends this place. Experience doth manifest that there is hardly a more healthful place to be found in the world that agreeth better with our English bodies. Many that have been weak and sickly in old England, by coming hither have been thoroughly healed and grown healthful strong. For here is a most extraordinary clear and dry air that is of a most healing nature to all such as are of a cold, melancholy, phlegmatic, rheumatic temper of body. . . . And therefore I think

it a wise course for all cold complexions to come to take physic in New England; for a sup of New England air is better than a whole draft of old England's ale." Now we who live in Kansas know well that its climate is superior to any other in the world, and that it enables one, more readily than any other, to dispense with the use of ale.

There are those who will tell us, and have indeed often told us, with a formidable array of statistics, that Kansas is inhabited only in small part by New Englanders, and that it is therefore fanciful in the extreme to think of it as representing Puritanism transplanted. It is true, the people of Kansas came mainly from "the Middle West"—from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Kentucky, and Missouri. But for our purpose the fact is of little importance, for it is the ideals of a people rather than the geography they have outgrown that determine their destiny; and in Kansas, as has been well said, "it is the ideas of the Pilgrims, not their descendants, that have had dominion in the young commonwealth." Ideas, sometimes, as well as the star of empire, move westward, and so it happens that Kansas is more Puritan than New England of today. It is akin to New England of early days. It is what New England, old England itself, once was—the frontier, an ever-changing spot where dwell the courageous who defy fate and conquer circumstances.

For the frontier is more than a matter of location, and Puritanism is itself a kind of frontier. There is an intellectual "West" as well as a territorial "West." Both are heresies, the one as much subject to the scorn of the judicious as the other. Broad classifications of people are easily made and are usually inaccurate; but they are convenient for taking a large view, and it may be worth while to think, for the moment, of two kinds of people—those who like the sheltered life, and those who cannot endure it, those who think the world as they know it is well enough, and those who dream of something better, or, at any rate, something different. From age to age society builds its shelters of various sorts—accumulated traditions, religious creeds, political institutions, and intellectual conceptions, cultivated and well-kept farms, well-built and orderly cities—providing a monotonous and comfortable life that tends always to harden into conventional forms resisting change. With all this the homekeeping and timid are well content. They sit in accustomed corners, disturbed by no fortuitous circumstance. But there are those others who are forever tugging at the leashes of ordered life,



eager to venture into the unknown. Forsaking beaten paths, they plunge into the wilderness. They must be always on the frontier of human endeavor, submitting what is old and accepted to conditions that are new and untried. The frontier is thus the seed plot where new forms of life, whether of institutions or types of thought, are germinated, the condition of all progress being in a sense a return to the primitive.

Now, generally speaking, the men who make the world's frontiers, whether in religion or politics, science or geographical exploration and territorial settlement, have certain essential and distinguishing qualities. They are primarily men of faith. Having faith in themselves, they are individualists. They are idealists because they have faith in the universe, being confident that somehow everything is right at the center of things; they give hostage to the future, are ever inventing God anew, and must be always transforming the world into their ideal of it. They have faith in humanity and in the perfectibility of man, are likely, therefore, to be believers in equality, reformers, intolerant, aiming always to level others up to their own high vantage. These qualities are not only Puritanism transplanted, but Americanism transplanted. In the individualism, the idealism, the belief in equality that prevail in Kansas, we shall therefore see nothing strangely new, but simply a new graft of familiar American traits. But, as Kansas is a community with a peculiar and distinctive experience, there is something peculiar and distinctive about the individualism, the idealism, and the belief in equality of its people. If we can get at this something peculiar and distinctive, it will be possible to understand why the sight of sun-flowers growing beside a railroad track may call forth the fervid expression "Dear old Kansas."

Individualism is everywhere characteristic of the frontier, and in America, where the geographical frontier has hitherto played so predominant a part, a peculiarly marked type of individualism is one of the most obvious traits of the people. "To the frontier," Professor Turner has said, "the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good

and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance that comes from freedom." On the frontier, where everything is done by the individual and nothing by organized society, initiative, resourcefulness, quick, confident, and sure judgment are the essential qualities for success. But, as the problems of the frontier are rather restricted and definite, those who succeed there have necessarily much the same kind of initiative and resourcefulness, and their judgment will be sure only in respect to the problems that are familiar to all. It thus happens that the type of individualism produced on the frontier and predominant in America has this peculiarity, that, while the sense of freedom is strong, there is nevertheless a certain uniformity in respect to ability, habit, and point of view. The frontier develops strong individuals, but it develops individuals of a particular type, all being after much the same pattern. The individualism of the frontier is one of achievement, not of eccentricity, an individualism of fact rising from a sense of power to overcome obstacles, rather than one of theory growing out of weakness in the face of oppression. It is not because he fears governmental activity, but because he has so often had to dispense with it, that the American is an individualist. Altogether averse from hesitancy, doubt, speculative or introspective tendencies, the frontiersman is a man of faith: of faith, not so much in some external power, as in himself, in his luck, his destiny; faith in the possibility of achieving whatever is necessary or he desires. It is this marked self-reliance that gives to Americans their tremendous power of initiative; but the absence of deep-seated differences gives to them an equally tremendous power of concerted social action.

The confident individualism of those who achieve through endurance is a striking trait of the people of Kansas. There, indeed, the trait has in it an element of exaggeration, arising from the fact that whatever has been achieved in Kansas has been achieved under great difficulties. Kansans have been subjected, not only to the ordinary hardships of the frontier, but to a succession of reverses and disasters that could be survived only by those for whom defeat is worse than death, who cannot fail because they cannot surrender. To the border wars succeeded hot winds, droughts, grasshoppers; and to the disasters of nature succeeded in turn the scourge of man, in the form of "mortgage fiends" and a contracting currency. Until 1895 the whole history of the state was a series of disasters, and always something new, extreme, bizarre, until the name Kansas be-

came a byword, a synonym for the impossible and the ridiculous, inviting laughter, furnishing occasion for jest and hilarity. "In God we trusted, in Kansas we busted" became a favorite motto of emigrants, worn out with the struggle, returning to more hospitable climes; and for many years it expressed well enough the popular opinion of that fated land.

Yet there were some who never gave up. They stuck it out. They endured all that even Kansas could inflict. They kept the faith, and they are to be pardoned perhaps if they therefore feel that henceforth there is laid up for them a crown of glory. Those who remained in Kansas from 1875 to 1895 must have originally possessed staying qualities of no ordinary sort, qualities which the experience of those years could only accentuate. And, as success has at last rewarded their efforts, there has come, too, a certain pride, an exuberance, a feeling of superiority that accompany a victory long delayed and hardly won. The result has been to give a peculiar flavor to the Kansas spirit of individualism. With Kansas history back of him, the true Kansan feels that nothing is *too much* for him. How shall he be afraid of any danger, or hesitate at any obstacle, having succeeded where failure was not only human, but almost honorable? Having conquered Kansas, he knows well that there are no worse worlds to conquer. The Kansas spirit is therefore one that finds something exhilarating in the challenge of an extreme difficulty. "No one," says St. Augustine, "loves what he endures, though he may love to endure." With Kansans it is particularly a point of pride to suffer easily the stings of fortune, and, if they find no pleasure in the stings themselves, the ready endurance of them gives a consciousness of merit that is its own reward. Yet it is with no solemn martyr's air that the true Kansan endures the worst that can happen. His instinct is rather to pass it off as a minor annoyance, furnishing occasion for a pleasantry, for it is the mark of a Kansan to take a reverse as a joke rather than too seriously. Indeed, the endurance of extreme adversity has developed a keen appreciation for that type of humor, everywhere prevalent in the West, which consists in ignoring a difficulty or transforming it into a difficulty of precisely the opposite kind. There is a tradition surviving from the grasshopper time that illustrates the point. It is said that in the midst of that overwhelming disaster, when the pests were six inches deep in the streets, the editor of a certain local paper fined his comment on the situation down to a single line, which appeared



among the trivial happenings of the week: "A grasshopper was seen on the courthouse steps this morning." This type of humor, appreciated anywhere west of the Alleghenies, is the type *par excellence* in Kansas. Perhaps it has rained for six weeks in the spring. The wheat is seemingly ruined; no corn has been planted. A farmer, who sees his profits for the year wiped out, looks at the murky sky, sniffs the damp air, and remarks seriously, "Well, it looks like rain. We may save that crop yet." "Yes," his neighbor replies with equal seriousness, "but it will have to come soon, or it won't do any good." When misfortunes beat down upon one in rapid succession, there comes a time when it is useless to strive against them, and in the end they engender a certain detached curiosity in the victim, who finds a mournful pleasure in observing with philosophical resignation the ultimate caprices of fate. Thus Kansans, "coiners of novel phrases to express their defiance of destiny," have employed humor itself as a refuge against misfortune. They have learned not only to endure adversity, but in a very literal sense to laugh at it as well.

I have already said that the type of individualism that is characteristic of America is one of achievement, not of eccentricity. The statement will bear repeating in this connection, for it is truer of Kansas than of most communities, notwithstanding there is a notion abroad that the state is peopled by freaks and eccentrics. It was once popularly supposed in Europe, and perhaps is so yet, that Americans are all eccentric. Now Kansans are eccentric in the same sense that Americans are: they differ somewhat from other Americans, just as Americans are distinguishable from Europeans. But a fundamental characteristic of Kansas individualism is the tendency to conform; it is an individualism of conformity, not of revolt. Having learned to endure to the end, they have learned to conform, for endurance is itself a kind of conformity. It has not infrequently been the subject of wondering comment by foreigners that in America, where everyone is supposed to do as he pleases, there should nevertheless be so little danger from violence and insurrection. Certainly one reason is that, while the conditions of frontier life release the individual from many of the formal restraints of ordered society, they exact a most rigid adherence to lines of conduct inevitably fixed by the stern necessities of life in a primitive community. On the frontier men soon learn to conform to what is regarded as essential, for the penalty of resistance or neglect is extinction:

there the law of survival works surely and swiftly. However eccentric frontiersmen may appear to the tenderfoot, among themselves there is little variation from type in any essential matter. In the new community, individualism means the ability of the individual to succeed, not by submitting to some external formal authority, still less by following the bent of an unschooled will, but by recognizing and voluntarily adapting himself to necessary conditions. Kansas, it is true, has produced its eccentrics, but there is a saying here that freaks are raised for export only. In one sense the saying is true enough, for what strikes one particularly is that, on the whole, native Kansans are all so much alike. It is a community of great solidarity, and to the native it is "the Easterner" who appears eccentric.

The conquest of the wilderness in Kansas has thus developed qualities of patience, of calm, stoical, good-humored endurance in the face of natural difficulties, of conformity to what is regarded as necessary. Yet the patience, the calmness, the disposition to conform, is strictly confined to what is regarded as in the natural course. If the Kansan appears stolid, it is only on the surface that he is so. The peculiar conditions of origin and history have infused into the character of the people a certain romantic and sentimental element. Beneath the placid surface there is something fermenting which is best left alone—a latent energy which trivial events or a resounding phrase may unexpectedly release. In a recent commencement address Mr. Henry King said that conditions in early Kansas were "*hair-triggered*." Well, Kansans are themselves hair-triggered; slight pressure, if it be of the right sort, sets them off. "Everyone is on the *qui vive*, alert, vigilant, like a sentinel at an outpost." This trait finds expression in the romantic devotion of the people to the state, in a certain alert sensitiveness to criticism from outside, above all in the contagious enthusiasm with which they will without warning espouse a cause, especially when symbolized by a striking phrase, and carry it to an issue. Insurgency is native in Kansas, and the political history of the state, like its climate, is replete with surprises that have made it "alternately the reproach and the marvel of mankind." But this apparent instability is only the natural complement of the extreme and confident individualism of the people: having succeeded in overcoming so many obstacles that were unavoidable, they do not doubt their ability to destroy quickly those that seem artificially constructed. It thus happens that, while no

people endure the reverses of nature with greater fortitude and good humor than the people of Kansas, misfortunes seemingly of man's making arouse in them a veritable passion of resistance; the mere suspicion of injustice, real or fancied exploitation by those who fare sumptuously, the pressure of laws not self-imposed, touch something explosive in their nature that transforms a calm and practical people into excited revolutionists. Grasshoppers elicited only a witticism, but the "mortgage fiends" produced the Populist regime, a kind of religious crusade against the infidel Money Power. The same spirit was recently exhibited in the "Boss Busters" movement, which in one summer spread over the state like a prairie fire and overthrew an established machine supposed to be in control of the railroads. The "higher law" is still a force in Kansas. The spirit which refused to obey "bogus laws" is still easily stirred. A people which has endured the worst of nature's tyrannies, and cheerfully submits to tyrannies self-imposed, is in no mood to suffer hardships that seem remediable.

Idealism must always prevail on the frontier, for the frontier, whether geographical or intellectual, offers little hope to those who see things as they are. To venture into the wilderness, one must see it, not as it is, but as it will be. The frontier, being the possession of those only who see its future, is the promised land which cannot be entered save by those who have faith. America, having been such a promised land, is therefore inhabited by men of faith: idealism is ingrained in the character of its people. But as the frontier in America has hitherto been geographical and material, American idealism has necessarily a material basis, and Americans have often been mistakenly called materialists. True, they seem mainly interested in material things. Too often they represent values in terms of money: a man is "worth" so much money; a university is a great university, having the largest endowment of any; a fine building is a building that cost a million dollars—better still, ten millions. Value is extensive rather than intensive or intrinsic. America is the best country because it is the biggest, the wealthiest, the most powerful; its people are the best because they are the freest, the most energetic, the *most* educated. But to see a materialistic temper in all this is to mistake the form for the spirit. The American cares for material things because they represent the substance of things hoped for. He cares less for money than for making money: a for-



tune is valued, not because it represents ease, but because it represents struggle, achievement, progress. The first skyscraper in any town is nothing in itself, but much as an evidence of growth; it is a white stone on the road to the ultimate goal.

Idealism of this sort is an essential ingredient of the Kansas spirit. In few communities is the word *progress* more frequently used, or its meaning less frequently detached from a material basis. It symbolizes the *summum bonum*, having become a kind of dogma. Mistakes are forgiven a man if he is progressive, but to be unprogressive is to be suspect; like Aristotle's nonpolitical animal, the unprogressive is extrahuman. This may explain why every Kansan wishes first of all to tell you that he comes from the town of X—, and then that it is the finest town in the state. He does not mean that it is strictly the finest town in the state, as will appear if you take the trouble to inquire a little about the country, its soil, its climate, its rainfall, and about the town itself. For it may chance that he is free to admit that it is hot there, that the soil is inclined to bake when there is no rain, that there is rarely any rain—all of which, however, is nothing to the point, because they are soon to have water by irrigation, which is, after all, much better than rainfall. And then he describes the town, which you have no difficulty in picturing vividly: a single street flanked by nondescript wooden shops; at one end a railroad station, at the other a post office; side streets lined with frame houses, painted or not, as the case may be; a schoolhouse somewhere, and a church with a steeple. It is such a town, to all appearances, as you may see by the hundred anywhere in the West—a dreary place, which, you think, the world would willingly let die. But your man is enthusiastic; he can talk of nothing but the town of X—. The secret of his enthusiasm you at last discover in the inevitable "but it will be a great country some day," and it dawns upon you that, after all, the man does not live in the dreary town of X—, but in the great country of *some day*. Such are Kansans. Like St. Augustine, they have their City of God, the idealized Kansas of some day: it is only necessary to have faith in order to possess it.

I cannot illustrate this aspect of Kansas idealism better than by quoting from Mrs. McCormick's little book of personal experience and observation. Having related the long years of struggle of a typical farmer, she imagines the Goddess of Justice revealing to him a picture of "the land as it shall be" when justice prevails.

John beheld a great plain four hundred miles long and two hundred miles wide—a great agricultural state covered with farmers tilling the soil and with here and there a city or village. On every farm stood a beautiful house handsomely painted outside and elegantly furnished inside, and equipped with all modern conveniences helpful to housekeeping. Brussels carpets covered the floors, upholstered furniture and pianos ornamented the parlors, and the cheerful dining room had elegant table linen, cut glass, and silverware. Reservoirs carried the water into the houses in the country the same as in the cities. The farmers' wives and daughters, instead of working like slaves without proper utensils or house furnishings, now had everything necessary to lighten work and make home attractive. They had the summer kitchen, the washhouse, houses for drying clothes, arbors, etc. The dooryards consisted of nicely fenced green lawns, wherein not a pig rooted nor mule browsed on the shrubbery nor hen wallowed in the flower beds. Shade trees, hammocks, and rustic chairs were scattered about, and everything bespoke comfort. Great barns sheltered the stock. The farms were fenced and subdivided into fields of waving grain and pastures green.

This is what John is supposed to have seen on a summer's day when, at the close of a life of toil, he had just been sold up for debt. What John really saw had perhaps a less feminine coloring; but the picture represents the ideal, if not of an actual Kansas farmer, at least of an actual Kansas woman.

This aspect of American idealism is, however, not peculiar to Kansas: it is more or less characteristic of all western communities. But there is an element in Kansas idealism that marks it off as a state apart. The origin of Kansas must ever be associated with the struggle against slavery. Of this fact Kansans are well aware. Kansas is not a community of which it can be said, "Happy is the people without annals." It is a state with a past. It has a history of which its people are proud, and which they insist, as a matter of course, upon having taught in the public schools. There are old families in Kansas who know their place and keep it—sacred bearers of the traditions of the Kansas struggle. The Kansas Struggle is for Kansas what the American Revolution is for New England; and, while there is as yet no "Society of the Daughters of the Kansas Struggle," there doubtless will be some day. For the Kansas Struggle is regarded as the crucial point in the achievement of human liberty, very much as Macaulay is said to have regarded the Reform Bill as the end for which all history was only a preparation. For all true Kansans, the border wars of the early years have a perennial interest: they mark the spot where Jones shot Smith, direct the attention of the traveler to the little village of Lecompton, or point with pride to some venerable tree bearing honorable scars dating from the Quantrill raid. Whether John Brown was an assassin or a martyr is a question

which only a native can safely venture to answer with confidence. Recently, in a list of questions prepared for the examination of teachers in the schools, there appeared the following: "What was the Andover Band?" It seems that very few teachers knew what the Andover Band was; some thought it was an iron band, and some a band of Indians. The newspapers took it up, and it was found that, aside from some of the old families, ignorance of the Andover Band was quite general. When it transpired that the Andover Band had to do with the Kansas Struggle, the humiliation of the people was profound.

The belief that Kansas was founded for a cause distinguishes it, in the eyes of its inhabitants, as pre-eminently the home of freedom. It lifts the history of the state out of the commonplace of ordinary westward migration, and gives to the temper of the people a certain elevated and martial quality. The people of Iowa or Nebraska are well enough, but their history has never brought them in touch with cosmic processes. The Pilgrims themselves are felt to have been actuated by less noble and altruistic motives. The Pilgrims, says Thayer, "fled from oppression, and sought in the new world 'freedom to worship God.'" But the Kansas emigrants migrated "to meet, to resist, and to destroy oppression, in vindication of their principles. These were self-sacrificing emigrants, the others were self-seeking. Justice, though tardy in its work, will yet load with the highest honors the memory of the Kansas pioneers who gave themselves and all they had to the sacred cause of human rights."

This may smack of prejudice, but it is no heresy in Kansas. The trained and disinterested physiocratic historian will tell us that such statements are unsupported by the documents. The documents show, he will say, that the Kansas emigrants, like other emigrants, came for cheap land and in the hope of bettering their condition; the real motive was economic, as all historic motives are; the Kansas emigrant may have thought he was going to Kansas to resist oppression, but in reality he went to take up a farm. At least, that many emigrants thought they came to resist oppression is indisputable. Their descendants still think so. And, after all, perhaps it is important to distinguish those who seek better farms and know they seek nothing else from those who seek better farms and imagine they are fighting a holy war. When the people of Newtown wished to remove to Connecticut, we are told that they advanced three reasons: first, "their want of accommodation for their cattle";



second, "the fruitfulness and commodiousness of Connecticut"; and finally, "*the strong bent of their spirits to remove thither.*" In explaining human history perhaps something should be conceded to "the strong bent of their spirits." Unquestionably cattle must be accommodated, but a belief, even if founded on error, is a fact that may sometimes change the current of history. At all events, the people of Kansas believe that their ancestors were engaged in a struggle for noble ends, and the belief, whether true or false, has left its impress upon their character. In Kansas the idealism of the geographical frontier has been strongly flavored with the notion that liberty is something more than a by-product of economic processes.

If Kansas idealism is colored by the humanitarian liberalism of the first half of the last century, it has nevertheless been but slightly influenced by the vague, emotional, Jean Paul romanticism of that time. Of all despondent and mystic elements the Kansas spirit is singularly free. There are few Byrons in Kansas, and no Don Juans. There is plenty of light there, but little of the "light that never was on land or sea." Kansas idealism is not a force that expends itself in academic contemplation of the unattainable. It is an idealism that is immensely concrete and practical, requiring always some definite object upon which to expend itself, but, once having such an object, expending itself with a restless, nervous energy that is appalling: whatever the object, it is pursued with the enthusiasm, the profound conviction given only to those who have communed with the absolute. It would seem that preoccupation with the concrete and the practical should develop a keen appreciation of relative values; but in new countries problems of material transformation are so insistent that immediate means acquire the value of ultimate ends. Kansas is a new state, and its inhabitants are so preoccupied with the present, so resolutely detached from the experience of the centuries, that they can compare themselves of today only with themselves of yesterday. The idea embodied in the phrase *Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht* has slight significance in a community in which twenty years of rapid material improvement has engendered an unquestioning faith in indefinite progress towards perfectibility. In such a community, past and future appear foreshortened, and the latest new mechanical device brings us an appreciable step nearer the millennium, which seems always to be just over the next hill. By some odd mental alchemy it thus happens that the

concrete and the practical have taken on the dignity of the absolute, and the pursuit of a convenience assumes the character of a crusade. Whether it be religion or paving, education or the disposal of garbage, that occupies for the moment the focus of attention, the same stirring activity, the same zeal and emotional glow are enlisted: all alike are legitimate objects of conquest, to be measured in terms of their visual and transferable assets, and won by concerted and organized attack. I recall reading in a local Kansas newspaper some time ago a brief comment on the neighboring village of X— (in which was located a small college mistakenly called a university) which ran somewhat as follows: "The University of X has established a music festival on the same plan as the one at the state university, and with most gratifying results. The first festival was altogether a success. X— is a fine town, one of the best in the state. It has a fine university, and a fine class of people, who have made it a center of culture. X— lacks only one thing: it has no sewers." Perhaps there are people who would find the juxtaposition of culture and sewers somewhat bizarre. But to us in Kansas it does not seem so. Culture and sewers are admittedly good things to possess. Well, then, let us pursue them actively and with absolute conviction. Thus may an idealized sewer become an object worthy to stir the moral depths of any right-minded community.

An insistent, practical idealism of this sort, always busily occupied with concrete problems, is likely to prefer ideas cast in formal mold, will be a little at a loss in the midst of flexible play of mind, and look with suspicion upon the emancipated, the critical, and the speculative spirit. It is too sure of itself to be at home with ideas of uncertain pressure. Knowing that it is right, it wishes only to go ahead. Satisfied with certain conventional premises, it hastens on to the obvious conclusion. It thus happens that Americans, for the most part, are complaisantly satisfied with a purely formal interpretation of those resounding words that symbolize for them the ideas upon which their institutions are supposed to rest. In this respect Kansas is truly American. Nowhere is there more loyal devotion to such words as *liberty*, *democracy*, *equality*, *education*. But preoccupation with the concrete fixes the attention upon the word itself, and upon what is traditionally associated with it. Democracy, for example, is traditionally associated with elections, and many of them. Should you maintain that democracy is not necessarily bound up with any particular institution, that it is in the way of being

smothered by the complicated blanket ballot, you will not be understood, or, rather, you will be understood only too well as advocating something aristocratic. Democracy is somehow bound up with a concrete thing, and the move for the shorter ballot is therefore undemocratic and un-American. Or, take the word *socialism*. Your avowed socialist is received politely, and allowed to depart silently and without regret. But, if you tell us of the movement for the governmental control of corporate wealth, we grow enthusiastic. The word *socialism* has a bad odor in Kansas, but the thing itself, by some other name, smells sweet enough.

If one is interested in getting the essential features of socialism adopted in Kansas, or in America itself, the name to conjure with is indeed not *socialism*, but *equality*.

In a country like America, where there is such confident faith in the individual, one might naturally expect to find the completest toleration, and no disposition to use the government for the purpose of enforcing uniform conditions: logically, it would seem, so much emphasis on liberty should be incompatible with much emphasis on equality. Yet it is precisely in America, and nowhere in America more than in the West, that liberty and equality always go coupled and inseparable in popular speech; where the sense of liberty is especially strong, there also the devotion to equality is a cardinal doctrine. Throughout our history the West has been a dominant factor in urging the extension of the powers of the national government, and western states have taken the lead in radical legislation of an equalizing character. This apparent inconsistency strikes one as especially pronounced in Kansas. The doctrine of equality is unquestioned there, and that governments exist for the purpose of securing it is the common belief. "A law against it" is the specific for every malady. The welfare of society is thought to be always superior to that of the individual, and yet no one doubts that perfect liberty is the birthright of every man.

Perhaps the truth is that real toleration is a sentiment foreign to the American temper. Toleration is for the skeptical, being the product of much thought or of great indifference, sometimes, to be sure, a mere *modus vivendi* forced upon a heterogeneous society. In America we imagine ourselves liberal-minded because we tolerate what we have ceased to regard as important. We tolerate religions but not irreligion, and diverse political opinion, but not unpolitical



opinion, customs, but not the negation of custom. The Puritans fought for toleration—for themselves. But, having won it for themselves, they straightway denied it to others. No small part of American history has been a repetition of the Puritan struggle; it has been a fight, not for toleration as a general principle, but for recognition of a civilization resting upon particular principles: in exterior relations, a struggle for recognition of America by Europe; in interior relations, a struggle for recognition of "the West" by "the East." The principle of toleration is written in our constitutions, but not in our minds, for the motive back of the famous guarantees of individual liberty has been recognition of particular opinion rather than toleration of every opinion. And in the nature of the case it must be so. Those who create frontiers and establish new civilizations have too much faith to be tolerant, and are too thoroughgoing idealists to be indifferent. On the frontier conditions are too hazardous for the speculative and the academic to flourish readily: only those who are right and are sure of it can succeed. Certainly it is characteristic of Americans to know that they are right. Certainly they are conscious of having a mission in the world and of having been faithful to it. They have solved great problems hitherto unsolved, have realized utopias dreamed of but never realized by Europe. They are therefore in the van of civilization, quite sure of the direction, triumphantly leading the march towards the ultimate goal. That everyone should do as he likes is part of the American creed only in a very limited sense. That it is possible to know what is right and that what is right should be recognized and adhered to is the more vital belief.

That *liberty* and *equality* are compatible terms is, at all events, an unquestioned faith in Kansas. The belief in equality, however, is not so much the belief that all men are equal as the conviction that it is the business of society to establish conditions that will make them so. And this notion, so far from being inconsistent with the pronounced individualism that prevails there, is the natural result of it. In Kansas, at least, no one holds to the right of the individual to do as he likes, irrespective of what it is that he likes. Faith in the individual is faith in the particular individual, the true Kansan, who has learned through adversity voluntarily to conform to what is necessary. Human nature, or, at all events, Kansas nature, is essentially good, and if the environment is right all men can measure up to that high level. That the right environment can

be created is not doubted. It is not possible for men so aggressive and self-reliant, who have overcome so many obstacles, to doubt their ability to accomplish this also. Having conquered nature, they cheerfully confront the task of transforming human nature. It is precisely because Kansans are such thoroughgoing individualists, so resourceful, so profoundly confident in their own judgments, so emancipated from the past, so accustomed to devising expedients for every new difficulty, that they are unimpressed by the record of the world's failures. They have always thrived on the impossible, and the field of many failures offers a challenge not to be resisted.

To effect these beneficent ends, the people of Kansas turn naturally to the government because they have a very simple and practical idea of what the government is and what it is for. The government, in Kansas, is no abstract concept. It is nothing German, nothing metaphysical. In this frontier community no one has yet thought of the government as a power not ourselves that makes for evil. Kansans think of the government, as they think of everything else, in terms of the concrete. And why, indeed, should they not? Within the memory of man there was no government in Kansas. They, Kansans, made the government themselves for their own purposes. The government is therefore simply certain men employed by themselves to do certain things; it is the sum of the energy, the good judgment, the resourcefulness of the individuals who originally created it, and who periodically renew it. The government is the individual writ large; in it every Kansan sees himself drawn to larger scale. The passion for controlling all things by law is thus not the turning of the hopeless and discouraged individual to some power other and higher than himself for protection; it is only the instinct to use effectively one of the many resources always at his command for achieving desired ends. Of a government hostile to the individual they cannot conceive; such a government is a bogus government, and its laws are bogus laws; to resist and overthrow such a government, all the initiative and resourcefulness is enlisted that is devoted to supporting one regarded as legitimate. There is a higher law than the statute book; the law of the state is no law if it does not represent the will of the individual.

To identify the will of the individual with the will of society in this easy fashion presupposes a certain solidarity in the community: an identity of race, custom, habits, needs; a consensus of opinion in respect to morals and politics. Kansas is such a com-

munity. Its people are principally American-born, descended from settlers who came mainly from the Middle West. It is an agricultural state, and the conditions of life are, or have been until recently, much the same for all. "Within these pastoral boundaries," says ex-Senator Ingalls, in his best Kansas manner, "there are no millionaires nor any paupers, except such as have been deprived by age, disease, and calamity of the ability to labor. No great fortunes have been brought to the state, and none have been accumulated by commerce, manufacture, or speculation. No sumptuous mansions nor glittering equipages nor ostentatious display exasperates or allures." And the feeling of solidarity resulting from identity of race and uniformity of custom has been accentuated by the peculiar history of the state. Kansans love each other for the dangers they have passed; a unique experience has created a strong *esprit de corps*—a feeling that, while Kansans are different from others, one Kansan is not only as good as any other, but very like any other. The philosophy of numbers, the doctrine of the majority, is therefore ingrained, and little sympathy is wasted on minorities. Rousseau's notion that minorities are only mistaken finds ready acceptance, and the will of the individual is easily identified with the will of society.

And in a sense the doctrine is true enough, for there is little difference of opinion on fundamental questions. In religion there are many creeds and many churches, but the difference between them is regarded as unimportant. There is, however, a quite absolute dogmatism of morality. Baptism is for those who enjoy it, but the moral life is for all. And what constitutes the moral life is well understood: to be honest and pay your debts; to be friendly and charitable, good-humored but not cynical, slow to take offense, but regarding life as profoundly serious; to respect sentiments and harmless prejudices; to revere the conventional great ideas and traditions; to live a sober life and a virtuous—to these they lay hold without questioning. Likewise in politics. One may be Democrat or Republican, stalwart or square-dealer, insurgent or stand-patter: it is no vital matter. But no one dreams of denying democracy, the will of the people, the greatest good to the greatest number, equal justice and equal opportunity to all. Whether in respect to politics or economics, education or morals, the consensus of opinion is very nearly perfect: it is an opinion that unites in the deification of the average, that centers in the dogmatism of the general level.

It goes without saying that the general level in Kansas is thought



to be exceptionally high. Kansans do not regard themselves as mere Westerners, like Iowans or Nebraskans. Having passed through a superior heat, they are Westerners seven times refined. "It is the quality of piety in Kansas," says Mr. E. H. Abbott, "to thank God that you are not as other men are, beer-drinkers, shiftless, habitual lynchers, or even as these Missourians." The pride is natural enough, perhaps, in men whose judgment has been vindicated at last in the face of general skepticism. Having for many years contributed to the gaiety of nations, Kansas has ceased to be the pariah of the states. Kansans have endured Job's comforters too long not to feel a little complaisant when their solemn predictions come to naught. "While envious rivals were jeering, . . . pointing with scorn's slow unmoving finger at the droughts, grasshoppers, hot winds, crop failures, and other calamities of Kansas, the world was suddenly startled and dazzled by her collective display of . . . products at the Centennial at Philadelphia, which received the highest awards." It is inevitable that those who think they have fashioned a cornerstone out of the stone rejected by the builders should regard themselves as superior workmen.

To test others by this high standard is an instinctive procedure. There is an alert attention to the quality of those who enter the state from outside. The crucial question is, are they "our kind of men"? Do they speak "the Kansas language"? Yet the Kansas language is less a form of speech or the expression of particular ideas than a certain personal quality. Some time since a distinguished visitor from the East came to the state to deliver a public address. He was most hospitably received, as all visitors are, whether distinguished or otherwise, and his address—permeated with the idealistic liberalism of a half century ago—was attentively listened to and highly praised. But to no purpose all these fine ideas. The great man was found wanting, for there was discovered, among his other impedimenta, a valet. It was a fatal mischance. The poor valet was more commented upon than the address, more observed than his master. The circumstance stamped the misguided man as clearly not our kind of man. Obviously, no man who carries a valet can speak the Kansas language. Needless to say, there are no valets in Kansas.

The feeling of superiority naturally attaching to a chosen people equally inclines Kansans to dispense readily with the advice or experience of others. They feel that those who have worn the hair shirt cannot be instructed in asceticism by those who wear silk.

In discussing the university and its problems with a member of the state legislature, I once hazarded some comparative statistics showing that a number of other states made rather more liberal appropriations for their universities than the state of Kansas did for hers. I thought the comparison might be enlightening, that the man's pride of state might be touched. Not at all. "I know all about that," he replied. "That argument is used by every man who is interested in larger appropriations for any of the state institutions. But it doesn't go with a Kansas legislature. In Kansas, we don't care much what other states are doing. Kansas always leads, but never follows." And, in fact, the disregard of precedent is almost an article of faith; that a thing has been done before is an indication that it is time to improve upon it. History may teach that men cannot be legislated into the kingdom of heaven. Kansans are not ignorant of the fact, but it is no concern of theirs. The experience of history is not for men with a mission and faith to perform it. Let the uncertain and the timid profit by history; those who have at all times the courage of their emotions will make history, not repeat it. Kansans set their own standards, and the state becomes, as it were, an experiment station in the field of social science.

The passion for equality in Kansas is thus the complement of the individualism and the idealism of its people. It has at the basis of it an altruistic motive, aiming not so much to level all men down as to level all men up. The Kansan's sense of individual worth enables him to believe that no one can be better than he is, while his confident idealism encourages him to hope that none need be worse.

The Kansas spirit is the American spirit double distilled. It is a new grafted product of American individualism, American idealism, American intolerance. Kansas is America in microcosm: as America conceives itself in respect to Europe, so Kansas conceives itself in respect to America. Within its borders, Americanism, pure and undefiled, has a new lease of life. It is the mission of this self-selected people to see to it that it does not perish from off the earth. The light on the altar, however neglected elsewhere, must ever be replenished in Kansas. If this is provincialism, it is the provincialism of faith rather than of the province. The devotion to the state is devotion to an ideal, not to a territory, and men can say "Dear old Kansas!" because the name symbolizes for them what the motto of the state so well expresses, *ad astra per aspera*.

From *Essays in American History Dedicated to Frederick Jackson Turner*, New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1910; reprinted by permission.









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